THE WORKS OF JAMES THOMSON.

VOL. IV.

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JAMES THOMSON.

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THE

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M. Hudson OF

JAMES THOMSON.

VOLUME THE FOURTH.

CONTAINING,

EDWARD and ELEONORA,

TANCRED and SIGISMUNDA,

AND

CORIOLANUS.

LONDON:
Printed for A. MILLAR, in the Strand,
M DCC LVII.

Edward and *Eleonora.*

A

TRAGEDY.

Edward and Eleonora.

A

TRAGEDY.

TO HER

ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE

Princeſs of *Wales.*

MADAM,

IF I take the liberty, once more, to crave the protection of your ROYAL HIGHNESS, for another Tragedy of my writing, it is becauſe I am led, almoſt unavoidably, to it, by my ſubject. In the character of ELEONORA I have endeavoured to re-

preſent, however faintly, a PRINCESS diſtinguiſh'd for all the virtues that render greatneſs amiable. I have aimed, particularly, to do juſtice to her inviolable affection and generous tenderneſs for a PRINCE, who was the darling of a great and free people.

Their deſcendants, even now, will own, with pleaſure, how properly this addreſs is made to your ROYAL HIGHNESS. I am, with the profoundeſt reſpect,

MADAM,

Your ROYAL HIGHNESS's

moſt humble, and

moſt devoted Servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

PROLOGUE.

By a FRIEND.

IN former Times, when fierce religious rage,
And prieſtly ſway deform'd each ſuffering age,
All manly wit, all uſeful learning lay
In darkneſs loſt, nor hop'd returning day.
Religion then was ſtain'd by cruel deeds:
And free-born Reaſon ſtoop'd to craft and creeds.
But happier we!—And tho' to-night we ſhow
What fatal ills from blind devotion flow,
'Tis not that we ſuch rage renew'd can fear,
Or dread the hand of perſecution here—
Our ſcene would wide humanity impart;
Would breathe extenſive candour thro' the heart;
Show true religion even to error kind,
And claim the perfect freedom of the mind.
If too the poet paints a noble ſtrife
'Twixt the fond huſband and the generous wife;
If all the father in his *voice complains,*
And all the mother in her *tender ſtrains;*

If these best passions prompt the pleasing woe,
Indulge it freely —— Nature bids it flow:
Where parent Nature leads, you cannot stray;
And what she wills, 'tis virtue to obey.
Fond of BRITANNIA's *fame, and just to* YOU,
He bids old English honour *live anew,*
And calls your great first EDWARD *up to view.*
But if his Line too weak, his stroke too faint,
The graceful figure, in full light, to paint;
In candid part his honest meaning take,
And spare the poet for the hero's sake.

EPI-

EPILOGUE.

By a FRIEND.

THESE Poets are ſuch fools!—The man behind,
Who wrote this play—a ſimple ſoul, I find,—
Believes with all his heart, there was a wife,
Who needs would die—to ſave a huſband's life!
He in the printed chronicles has read it:
And true it is——Sir Richard Baker *ſaid it.*
Why what an aſs theſe books do make a man?
Read nature——then believe it—you who can.
Look round this town—the queſtion is not—whether
Spouſe dies *for ſpouſe: but who will* live *together?*
Of old, they ſay, a huſband was a lover:
But, thank our ſtars! thoſe fooliſh days are over:
To ſuch ſubſtantial prudence are we come,
We wed not heart to heart—but plumb to plumb.
What ſenſe? what beauty? are not now the things:
But can he *ſettle*—up *to what* ſhe *brings?*
Yet in this eaſy, all-forgiving age,
Bear with ſuch moral fooleries—on the ſtage.
Perhaps too, there may be ſome gentle ſoul,
Who rather likes to weep—than win a vole;
Who thinks that there are *charms in generous love,*
And would to Edward Eleonora *prove.*

The Perſons repreſented.

EDWARD, Prince of *England.*	Mr. *Delane.*
Earl of GLOSTER.	Mr. *Roſco.*
THEALD, Archdeacon of *Liege.*	Mr. *Roberts.*
SELIM, Sultan of *Jaffa.*	Mr. *Ryan.*
ELEONORA, Princeſs of *England.*	Mrs. *Horton.*
DARAXA, an *Arabian* Princeſs.	Mrs. *Hallam.*

Aſſaſſin, Officers, &c.

SCENE, EDWARD's *tent in the camp before* Jaffa, *a city on the coaſt of* Paleſtine.

Edward and *Eleonora*.

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Prince EDWARD, THEALD *Archdeacon of* Leige, *Earl of* GLOSTER.

EDWARD.

I Will no longer doubt. 'Tis plain, my friends,
That with our little band of *Engliſh* troops,
By all allies all weſtern powers deſerted,
All but the noble knights that guard this land,
The flower of *Europe* and of Chriſtian valour,
Nought can be done, nought worthy of our cauſe,

Worthy of *England*'s heir, and of the name
Of *Lion-hearted* RICHARD; whoſe renown,
After almoſt a century elaps'd,
Shakes through its wide extent this eaſtern world.
What elſe could bend the *Saracen* to peace,
Who might, with better policy, refuſe
To grant it us? yes, to the prince of *Jaffa*
I will accord the peace he has demanded:
And tho' my troops, impatient, wait the ſignal
To ſtorm yon walls, yet will I not expoſe,
In vain attempts, valour that ſhould be ſav'd
For better days, and for the public welfare.
Raſh fruitleſs war, from wanton glory wag'd,
Is only ſplendid murder—What ſays *Theald?*
Approves my reverend father of my purpoſe?

THEALD.

Edward; illuſtrious heir of *England*'s crown,
I muſt indeed be blinded with the zeal
Of this our holy cauſe, to think your arms,
Thus all-forſaken, thus betray'd, ſufficient
To reach the grandeur of your firſt deſign,
And, from the yoke of infidels, to free
The ſacred city, object of our vows;
Yet this, methinks, this *Jaffa* might be ſeiz'd:
That ſtill were ſomething, an auſpicious omen
Of future conqueſt—But, unſkill'd in war,
To you, my lord, and *Gloſter*'s wiſe experience,
I this ſubmit.

EDWARD.

EDWARD.

Speak, *Gloſter*, your advice,
Before I fix my lateſt reſolution.

GLOSTER.

You know, my lord, I never was a friend
To this cruſado. My unchang'd advice
Is ſtrenuous ſtill for peace. Nor this, I urge,
From our deſerted arms, and cauſe betray'd,
But from the ſtate of our unhappy country.
Behold her, *Edward*, with a filial eye,
And ſay, is this a time for theſe adventures?
Behold her then with deep commotion ſhook,
Beneath a falſe deluſive face of quiet:
Behold her bleeding yet from civil war,
Exhauſted, ſunk; drain'd by ten thouſand arts
Of lawleſs impoſition, prieſtly fraud,
Italian leeches, and inſatiate *Rome*;
That never rag'd before with ſuch groſs inſult,
With ſuch abandon'd avarice. Beſides,
Who knows what evil counſellors, again,
Are gather'd round the throne! In times like theſe,
Diſturb'd, and lowring with unſettled freedom,
One ſtep to lawleſs power, one bold attempt
Renew'd, the leaſt infringement of our charters,
Would in the giddy nation raiſe a tempeſt.
Return my prince. You have already ſav'd
Your father from his foes, from haughty *Leiſter*:
Now ſave him from his miniſters, from thoſe
Who hold him captive in the worſt of chains—

EDWARD.

You, *Gloſter*, ſav'd us both.

GLOSTER.

I did my duty;
Even while I join'd with *Leiſter*, did my duty—
I hope I did—He, who contends for freedom,
Can ne'er be juſtly deem'd his ſovereign's foe:
No, 'tis the wretch that tempts him to ſubvert it,
The ſoothing ſlave, the traitor in the boſom,
Who beſt deſerves that name; he is a worm
That eats out all the happineſs of kingdoms.
Edward, return; loſe not a day, an hour,
Before this city. Tho' your cauſe be holy,
Believe me, 'tis a much more pious office,
To ſave your father's old and broken years,
His mild and eaſy temper, from the ſnares
Of low corrupt inſinuating traitors:
A nobler office far! on the firm baſe
Of well proportion'd liberty, to build
The common quiet, happineſs and glory,
Of king and people, *England*'s riſing grandeur.
To you, my prince, this taſk, of right, belongs.
Has not the royal heir a juſter claim
To ſhare his father's inmoſt heart and counſels,
Than aliens to his int'reſt, thoſe, who make
A property, a market of his honour?
One reaſon more allow me to ſuggeſt
For peace, immediate peace—ſhould blind misfortune,
In this far diſtant hoſtile land, oppreſs us;

A chance to which our weakneſs ſtands expos'd:
What, *Edward*, of thy princeſs would become,
Thy *Eleonora*; ſhe, whoſe tender love
Thro' ſtormy ſeas, and in fierce camps attends thee?
What of thy blooming offspring? charg'd with theſe,
To give our courage ſcope were cruel raſhneſs.

EDWARD.

Enough, my lord, I ſtand reſolv'd on peace;
And will to *England* ſtrait—But where, alas,
Where ſhall we cover our inglorious heads;
When gay with hope the people round us preſs,
To hear by what exploits we have ſuſtain'd
The fame of *Richard*, and of *Engliſh* valour?
Shall I, my generous country, I be rank'd
With thoſe weak princes, who conſume thy wealth,
And ſink thy name in idle expeditions?
Perfidious *France!* Be this the ruling point
Of my whole life and paſſion of my ſoul,
To humble thee, proud nation!—Meantime, *Gloſter*,
See that the captive princeſs be reſtor'd,
Daraxa to the Sultan of this city,
Whoſe bride ſhe is—We wage not war with women.

SCENE

SCENE II.

EDWARD, THEALD, GLOSTER,
An Officer belonging to the Prince.

OFFICER.

One from the prince of *Jaffa*, Sir, demands
Your ſecret ear on ſome important meſſage.

EDWARD.

Conduct him to my tent— [*Officer goes out.*
He brings, I judge,
The Sultan's laſt inſtructions for this peace.
Here wait: I may your faithful counſel want.

SCENE III.

THEALD, GLOSTER.

THEALD.

Whatever woes, of late, have clouded *England*;
Yet muſt I, *Gloſter*, call that nation happy,
On whoſe horizon ſmiles a dawning prince
Of *Edward*'s worth and virtues.

GLOSTER.

True, my friend;
Edward has great, has amiable virtues,
That virtue chiefly which beſits a prince:

He

He loves the people he muſt one day rule;
With fondneſs loves them, with a noble pride;
Eſteems their good, eſteems their glory his.
One inſtance it becomes me to recount,
That ſhows the genuine greatneſs of his ſoul.
Tho' I have met him in the bloody field,
He fighting for his father, I for freedom;
Yet bears his boſom no remaining grudge
Of thoſe diſtracted times: to me his heart
Is greatly reconcil'd—Virtue! beyond
The little unforgiving ſoul of tyrants!
Now will I tell thee, *Theald*, whence I ſtoop
To wear the gaudy chains of court-attendance,
At theſe grey years; that ſhould in calm retirement
Paſs the ſoft evening of a buſtling life,
And plume my parting ſoul for better worlds.
Amidſt his many virtues, youthful *Edward*
Is lofty, warm, and abſolute of temper:
I therefore ſeek to moderate his heat,
To guide his fiery virtues, that, miſled
By dazling power and flattering ſycophants,
Might finiſh what his father's weaker meaſures
Have try'd in vain. And hence I here attend him,
In expeditions which I ne'er approv'd,
In holy wars—your pardon, reverend father—
I muſt declare I think ſuch wars the fruit
Of idle courage or miſtaken zeal,
Sometimes of rapine and religious rage,

To every miſchief prompt.

THEALD.

You wrong, my lord,
You wrong them much. To ſet this matter only
Upon a civil footing: ſay, what right
Had robbers ruſhing from *Arabian* deſarts,
Fierce as the ſuns that kindled up their rage,
Thus, in a barbarous torrent, to bear down
All *Aſia*, *Afric*, and profane their altars?
And to repel brute force by force is juſt.
Nay, does not even our duty, int'reſt, glory,
The common honour of the Chriſtian name,
Require us to repreſs their wild ambition,
That labours weſtward ſtill, and threatens *Europe*?

GLOSTER.

Yes, when they burſt their limits, let us check them:
And with a firmer hand than thoſe looſe Chriſtians,
The moſt corrupt and abjeſt of mankind,
Slaves, doubly ſlaves, who ſuffer'd theſe *Arabians*,
In virtue their ſuperiors as in valour,
Without reſiſtance to o'er-run the world.
By rage and zeal, 'tis true, their empire roſe:
But now ſome ſettled ages of poſſeſſion
Create a right, than which, I fear, few nations
Can ſhew a better. Sure I am 'tis madneſs,
Inhuman madneſs, thus, from half the world,
To drain its blood and treaſure, to neglect
Each art of peace, each care of government;

And

And all for what? By ſpreading deſolation,
Rapine and ſlaughter o'er the other half,
To gain a conqueſt we can never hold.
I venerate this land. Thoſe ſacred hills,
Thoſe vales, thoſe cities, trod by ſaints and prophets,
By GOD himſelf, the ſcenes of heavenly wonders,
Inſpire me with a certain awful joy.
But the ſame GOD, my friend, pervades, ſuſtains,
Surrounds and fills this univerſal frame;
And every land where ſpreads his vital preſence,
His all-enlivening breath, to me is holy.
Excuſe me, *Theald*, if I go too far:
I meant alone to ſay, I think theſe wars
A kind of perſecution. And when that,
That moſt abſurd and cruel of all vices,
Is once begun, where ſhall it find an end?
Each in his turn, or has or claims a right
To wield its dagger, to return its furies;
And, firſt or laſt, they fall upon our ſelves.

EDWARD, *behind the Scenes.*

Inhuman villain! is thy meſſage murder?

THEALD.

Ha! heard you not the prince exclaiming murder?

GLOSTER.

Should this Barbarian meſſenger—

(Moving towards the noiſe.

'Tis ſo!

SCENE

SCENE IV.

THEALD, GLOSTER; *to them prince* EDWARD *wounded in the arm, and dragging in the aſſaſſin.*

EDWARD.

Deteſted wretch! And does the prince of *Jaffa*
Send baſe aſſaſſins to tranſact his treaties?
There—take thy anſwer, ruffian!
(Stabs him with the dagger he had wreſted from him.
Blow too haſty!
I ſhould have ſav'd thee for a fitter death.

ASSASSIN.

I would have triumph'd, Chriſtian, in thy rage.
For know, thou vile deſtroyer of the faithful!
That tho' my erring dagger miſs'd thy heart,
Yet has it fir'd thy veins with mortal poiſon,
Whoſe very touch is death—ALLAH be prais'd!
O glorious fate! prophet, receive my ſoul! *(Dies.*

EDWARD, *after a ſhort pauſe.*

Why gaze you with amazement on each other?
Are we not men, to whom the various chances
Of life are known?

GLOSTER.

Ha! poiſon! did he ſay?
Then is at once my prince and country loſt!
O fatal wound to *England!*

THEALD.

THEALD.

Quick, my lord,
Retire and have it dreſt, without delay;
Ere the fell poiſon can diffuſe its rage,
And deeply taint your blood.

EDWARD.

The princeſs comes!
O ſave me from her tenderneſs!

SCENE V.

EDWARD, THEALD, GLOSTER; *to them the princeſs* ELEONORA.

ELEONORA.

My *Edward!*
Support me!—Oh!

EDWARD.

She faints—My *Eleonora!*
Look up, and bleſs me with thy gentle eyes!—
The colour comes, her cheeks reſume their beauty,
And all her charms revive—Hence, ſpurn that carcaſs:
A ſight too ſhocking for my *Eleonora.*

ELEONORA.

And lives my *Edward,* lives my deareſt lord,
From this aſſaſſin ſav'd?—Alas! you bleed!

EDWARD.

EDWARD.

'Tis nought, my lovely princeſs!—A ſlight wound—

ELEONORA.

But, ah! methought, I entering heard of poiſon,
Tainting the blood--What! was the dagger poiſon'd?—
Ha! ſilent all? will none relieve my fears?—

GLOSTER.

Madam, reſtrain your tenderneſs a moment—
The prince delays too long—Let him retire.
Meanwhile, the troubled camp ſhall be my care;
Leſt the baſe foe ſhould make a ſudden ſally,
While yet our troops are ſtun'd with this diſaſter.

EDWARD.

I thank thee, noble *Gloſter*. Nor, alone
Support my troops; go, rouſe them to revenge;
Tell them their injur'd prince will try their love,
Their valour ſoon—And you, my friend, good *Theald*,
Attend the princeſs—Chear thee, *Eleonora!*
I cannot, will not, leave thee long, to vex
Thy tender ſoul with aggravated fears.

THEALD.

Behold *Daraxa*, the falſe Sultan's bride.

SCENE

SCENE VI.

ELEONORA, THEALD, DARAXA.

DARAXA.

Princeſs of *England*, let me ſhare thy grief.
Whence flow theſe tears? and what this wild alarm,
This noiſe of murder and aſſaſſination?

ELEONORA.

Alas! the prince is wounded by a ruffian;
And with a poiſon'd dagger, as I fear.
Yet none will eaſe me of this racking thought—
Nay, tell me, *Theald*, ſince to know the worſt
Is oft a kind of miſerable comfort;
What has befal'n the prince? For this ſlight wound
Could never thus o'ercaſt the brave with terror.

THEALD.

I dare not, princeſs, dally with your fate.
An impious villain, from the Sultan *Selim*,
Pretended to the prince a ſecret meſſage,
About the peace in treaty. Dreading nought,
He left us here, and to his tent retir'd,
There to receive this execrable envoy.
Strait with the prince alone, the fierce aſſaſſin
Attempt on his life; but, in his arm,
He took, it ſeems, the blow, and from the villain
Wreſting the dagger, plung'd it to his heart.

This

This laſt we ſaw, and heard the inhuman bigot,
Who deem'd himſelf a martyr in their cauſe,
Boaſt, as he dy'd, the prince's wound was poiſon'd—

ELEONORA.

Then all I fear'd is true! then am I wretched,
Beyond even hope!

DARAXA.

A villain from the Sultan!—

ELEONORA.

Ah the diſtracting thought! And is my life!
My love! my *Edward!* on the brink of fate!
Of fate that may this moment ſnatch him from me!

DARAXA.

What! *Selim* ſend aſſaſſins? and beneath
A name ſo ſacred? *Selim*, whoſe renown
Is incenſe breathing o'er the ſweeten'd eaſt;
For each humane, each generous virtue fam'd;
Selim! the rock of faith! and ſun of honour!

ELEONORA.

O compliçated woe! The Chriſtian cauſe
Has now no more a patron, and reſtorer;
England no more a prince, in whom ſhe plac'd
Her glory, her delight, her only hope;
Theſe deſolated troops no more a chief;
No more a huſband, a protector, I,
A friend, a lover! and my helpleſs children
No more a father!

DARAXA.

Pardon, gentle princeſs,

If

If in this whirlwind of revolving paſſions,
That ſnatch my ſoul by turns, I have forgot
To pay the tribute which I owe thy ſorrows—
But I myſelf, alas! am more unhappy!

ELEONORA.

What woes can equal mine? who loſe, thus vilely,
The beſt! the braveſt! lovelieſt of mankind!—

DARAXA.

You only *loſe* the man you love, but I,
O inſupportable! muſt learn to *hate*,
To *ſcorn* what once was all my pride and tranſport!
Should *Edward* die by this accurſed crime,
(Which heaven forbid) he dies admir'd, belov'd,
In the full bloom of fame and ſpotleſs honour.
To you the daughter of illuſtrious grief,
Your tears remain, and ſadly-ſweet reflection;
You with his image, with his virtues, ſtill,
Amidſt the penſive gloom, may converſe hold:
While I—Ah! nothing meets my blaſted ſight
But a black view of infamy and horror!
What is the loſs of life to loſs of virtue!—
And yet how can this heavenly ſpark be loſt?
No! virtue burns with an immortal flame.
He is bely'd—ſome villain has abus'd him.

THEALD.

I honour, madam, this your virtuous grief:
But that the Sultan did employ th' aſſaſſin
Is paſt all doubt—Behold the falſe inſtructions,

By

By which he gain'd admittance.

(*Giving her the letter the prince had dropt.*

DARAXA.

Ha!—'Tis ſo!

His hand! his ſeal!—From my deteſting heart,
I tear him thus for ever!—Periſh, *Selim!*
Periſh the feeble wretch, who more bewails him!
That were to ſhare his guilt!—Unhappy princeſs!
Now let me turn my ſoul to thy aſſiſtance—
There is a cure, 'tis true—

ELEONORA.

A Cure, *Daraxa!*

O ſay, what cure?

DARAXA.

No; it avails not, madam;
None can be found to riſque it.

ELEONORA.

None to riſque it?
Quick tell me what it is, my dear *Daraxa.*

DARAXA.

To find ſome perſon, that, with friendly lip,
May draw the poiſon forth; at leaſt, its rage
And mortal ſpirit. This will bring the wound
Within the power of art: but certain death
Attends the generous deed.

ELEONORA, *kneeling.*

Then hear me, heaven!
Prime ſource of love! Ye ſaints and angels, hear me!
I here devote me for the beſt of men,

Of

Of princes and of huſband. On this croſs
I ſeal the cordial vow: confirm it heaven!
And grant me courage in the hour of trial!

THEALD.

O tenderneſs unequal'd!

DARAXA.

Glorious princeſs!

ELEONORA.

Go, *Theald*, quickly find the earl of *Gloſter*,
And with him break this matter to the prince.
As for the perſon, leave that taſk to me.
I with *Daraxa* will your call attend;
O all ye powers of love, your influence lend.

End of the Firſt Act.

ACT II. SCENE I.

GLOSTER, THEALD.

GLOSTER.

NO; *Theald*, no; he never will conſent—
I know him well; he ne'er will purchaſe life,
At ſuch a rate: beſides, in aid of love,
His generous pride would come, and deem it baſeneſs.

THEALD.

Then is yon ſun his laſt. The blackning wound
Begins already to confeſs the poiſon—
Meantime, my lord, both friendſhip and our duty
Demand, at leaſt, the trial. Well I know,
That, poiſe his life with hers, he would as nothing
Eſteem his own: but ſure the life of thouſands,
The mingled cauſe at once of heaven and earth,
Should o'er the beſt the deareſt life prevail.

GLOSTER.

Alas! my friend, you *reaſon*, *Edward loves*.
How weak the head contending with the heart!
Yet be the trial made—Behold he comes.

SCENE II.

EDWARD, GLOSTER, THEALD.

EDWARD, *entering.*

O thou bright ſun! now haſt'ning to thoſe climes,
That parent-iſle, which I no more ſhall ſee;
And for whoſe welfare oft my youthful heart
Has vainly form'd ſo many a fond deſign;
O thither bear, reſplendent orb of day,
To that dear ſpot of earth, my laſt farewel!
And oh! eternal providence, whoſe courſe,
Amidſt the various maze of life, is fix'd
By boundleſs wiſdom and by boundleſs love,
I follow thee, with reſignation, hope,
With confidence and joy; for thou art good,
And of thy riſing goodneſs is no end!
Well met, my deareſt friends!—It was too true
The villain's threatning, and I nearly touch
That awful hour which every man muſt prove,
Yet every man ſtill ſhifts at diſtance from him.
Come then, and let us fill the ſpace between
Theſe laſt important moments, whence we take
Our lateſt tincture for eternity,
With ſolemn converſe and exalting friendſhip—
Nay—*Theald*—*Gloſter*—wound me not with tears,
With tears that fall o'er venerable cheeks!

What could the princeſs more?—Ah! there, indeed,
At every thought of her, I feel a weight,
A dreadful weight of tenderneſs, that ſhakes
My firmeſt reſolution—Where is ſhe?

THEALD.

She burns with fond impatience to attend you.

EDWARD.

And how, brave *Gloſter*, did you leave the camp?

GLOSTER.

The camp, ſir, is ſecure: each ſoldier there
From indignation draws new force and ſpirit.
O 'tis a glorious, an affecting ſight!
Thoſe furrow'd cheeks that never knew before
The dew of tears, now in a copious ſhower
Are bath'd. Around your tent they, anxious, crowd,
Rank over rank: ſome preſſing for a look;
Some ſadly muſing, with dejected eye;
Some, on their knees, preferring vows to heaven;
And, with extended arm, ſome breathing vengeance.
" Baſe *Saracens*, they cry, perfidious cowards!
" But blood ſhall waſh out blood--Ah! poor atonement,
" Did the whole bleeding city fall a victim!"

EDWARD.

Alas, that to repay their faithful love
I cannot live!—Yet moderate their zeal;
And let the ſword of juſtice only ſtrike
The faithleſs *Selim*, and his guilty council.
My new-departed ſpirit, juſt eſcap'd
From the low fev'riſh paſſions of this life,

Would

Would grieve to ſee the blood of innocence
With that of guilt confounded, ſtain my tomb.

THEALD.

Permit me, ſir, the hope, that yourſelf——
I ſpeak it on juſt cauſe—may live to puniſh
This breach of all the ſacred rights of men.

EDWARD.

Why will you turn my thoughts, from earth enlarg'd,
To ſoft enfeebling views of life again?

THEALD.

Not to a vain deſire of life, my lord,
I would recal them; but inſpire each hope,
Adviſe each poſſibility to ſave it.
And there is yet a remedy.

EDWARD.

Deluſion!

THEALD.

The fair *Arabian* princeſs mention'd one.

EDWARD.

She one!—*Daraxa!*—ſomething to compleat
Her lover's crime.

THEALD.

You could not wrong her thus,
Had you beheld the tempeſt of her ſoul,
Her grief, her rage, confuſion, when ſhe heard
Of *Selim*'s baſeneſs; had you ſeen that honour,
That glorious fire which darted from her eyes;
'Till in a flood of virtuous ſorrow ſunk
She almoſt equal'd *Eleonora*'s tears.

EDWARD.

What was it ſhe propos'd?

THEALD.

It was, my lord,
To find ſome perſon, who, with friendly lip,
Might draw the deadly ſpirit——

EDWARD.

I have heard
Of ſuch a cure; but is it not, good *Theald*,
An action fatal to the kind performer?

THEALD.

Yes, ſurely fatal.

EDWARD.

Name it then no more.
I ſhould deſpiſe the paltry life it purchas'd.
Beſides, what mortal can diſpoſe ſo raſhly
Of his own life? Talk not of low condition,
And of my public rank: when life or death
Becomes the queſtion, all diſtinctions vaniſh;
Then the firſt monarch and the loweſt ſlave
On the ſame level ſtand, in this the ſons
Of equal nature all.

THEALD.

Allow me, ſir.
If 'tis a certain, an eſtabliſh'd duty,
Than duty more, the height of human virtue,
To ſacrifice a tranſitory life

For

For that kind ſource from whence it is deriv'd,
And all its guarded joys, our deareſt country;
It may be juſtly ſacrific'd for thoſe
On whom depends the welfare of the public.
And there is one, my lord, who ſtands devoted,
By ſolemn and irrevocable vows,
To die for you.

EDWARD.

To die for me!—Kind nature!
Thanks to thy forming hand, I can myſelf,
Chearful, ſuſtain to pay this debt I owe thee,
Without the borrow'd ſufferings of another.
No, *Theald*, urge this argument no more.
I love not life to that degree, to purchaſe,
By the ſure death of ſome brave guiltleſs friend,
A few uncertain days, that often riſe,
Like this, ſerene and gay, when, with ſwift wing,
A moment wraps them in diſaſtrous fate.

GLOSTER.

Did we conſult to ſave your ſingle life,
Was that the preſent queſtion, thy refuſal
Were juſt, were generous. But, my lord, this perſon,
Who ſtands for you devoted, ſhould, in that,
Be deem'd devoted for the chriſtian cauſe,
The common cauſe of *Europe* and thy country;
Dies for the brave companions of thy fortune,
Who weeping now around thy tent conjure thee
To live for them, and *England*'s promis'd glory.
O ſave our country, *Edward!* ſave a nation,

The choſen land, the laſt retreat of freedom,
Amidſt a world enſlav'd!—Caſt back thy view,
And trace from fartheſt times her old renown.
Think of the blood that, to maintain her rights,
And guard her ſheltering laws, has flow'd in battle,
Or on the patriot's ſcaffold. Think what cares,
What vigilance, what toils, what bright contention,
In councils, camps, and well-diſputed ſenates,
It coſt our generous anceſtors, to raiſe
A matchleſs plan of freedom: whence we ſhine,
Even in the jealous eye of hoſtile nations,
The happieſt of mankind.—Then ſee all this,
This virtue, wiſdom, toil and blood of ages,
Behold it ready to be loſt for ever.
In this important, this deciſive hour,
On thee, and thee alone, our weeping country
Turns her diſtreſsful eye; to thee ſhe calls,
And with a helpleſs parent's piercing voice.
Wilt thou not live for her? for her ſubdue
A graceful pride, I own, but ſtill a pride,
That more becomes thy courage and thy youth
Than birth and public ſtation? Nay, for her,
Say, wouldſt thou not reſign the deareſt paſſions?

EDWARD.

O there is nothing, which for thee, my country,
I, in my proper perſon, could not ſuffer!
But thus to ſculk behind another's life,
'Tis what I have not courage to ſupport,
It makes a kind of coward of me, *Gloſter*.

But let me ſee this friend, whoſe generous virtue
Exceeds what even my favourable thoughts
Had imag'd in the ſelfiſh race of man.
The purpoſe claims the merit of the deed;
And ere I die I muſt requite his friendſhip.
Conduct him hither, *Theald.*

SCENE III.

EDWARD, GLOSTER.

EDWARD.

Ah, my *Gloſter*,
You have not touch'd on ſomething that here pleads
For longer life, beyond the force of reaſon,
Perhaps too powerful pleads—my *Eleonora!*
To thee, my friend, I will not be aſham'd
Even to avow my love in all its fondneſs.
For oh there ſhines in this my dearer ſelf!
This partner of my ſoul! ſuch a mild light
Of careleſs charms, of unaffected beauty,
Such more than beauty, ſuch endearing goodneſs,
That when I meet her eye where cordial faith,
And every gentle virtue mix their luſtre,
I feel a tranſport that partakes of anguiſh!
How ſhall I then behold her, on the point
To leave her, *Gloſter*, in a diſtant land?

For ever in a ſtormy world to leave her?
There is no miſery to be fear'd like that
Which from our greateſt happineſs proceeds!

SCENE IV.

EDWARD, GLOSTER, THEALD *preſenting the princeſs* ELEONORA *as the perſon he went to bring*, DARAXA.

EDWARD.

O heaven!—what do I ſee?—I am betray'd!—
[*Turning away.*

ELEONORA.

Edward!

EDWARD.

O 'tis too much! O ſpare me, nature!

ELEONORA.

Not look upon me, *Edward?*

EDWARD.

Eleonora!
How on this dreadful errand canſt thou come?

ELEONORA.

Behold me kneel——

EDWARD.

Why kneel you, beſt of women!
You ne'er offended, ne'er in thought offended!
Thou art all truth, and love, and angel-goodneſs!

Why

Why do you kneel? O riſe, my *Eleonora!*

ELEONORA.

Let me fulfil my vow.

EDWARD.

O never! never!—

ELEONORA.

Let me preſerve a life, in which is wrapt
The life of thouſands, dearer than my own!
Live thou, and let me die for thee, my *Edward!*

EDWARD.

For me!—thy words are daggers to my ſoul.
And wouldſt thou have me then thus meanly ſave
A deſpicable life? a life expos'd
To that worſt torment, to my own contempt!
A life ſtill haunted by the cruel image
Of thy laſt pangs, thy agonizing throws,
The dire convulſions of theſe tender limbs;
And all for one—O infamy!—for one,
By love, by duty bound, each manly tie,
Even by a peaſant's honour to protect thee?
Yet this, tho' ſtrong, invincible, is nought
To what my wounded tenderneſs could urge
Againſt thy dire requeſt—But ſhould fate demand
The life we love, then, then, we muſt exert
The greateſt act of human reſignation,
We muſt ſubmit. But wouldſt thou have me, ſay,
Doom thee myſelf? with voluntary choice,
Nay by a barbarous crime, untimely ſnatch
The worſt of ills? Would *Eleonora* make me

Of all mankind the moſt compleatly wretched?

ELEONORA.

Plead not the voice of honour. Well I know,
There is no danger, pain, no form of death,
Thou wouldſt not meet with tranſport to protect me.
But I, alas! an unimportant woman,
Whoſe only boaſt and merit is to love thee;
Ah, what am I, with nameleſs numbers weigh'd?
With myriads yet unborn? All ranks, all ages,
All arts, all virtues, all a ſtate comprizes?
Theſe have a higher claim to thy protection.
Live then for them.—O make a generous effort!
What none but heroes can, bid the ſoft paſſions,
The private ſtoop to thoſe that graſp the public.
Live to poſſeſs the pleaſure of a God,
To bleſs a people truſted to thy care.
Live to fulfil thy long career of glory,
But juſt begun. To die for thee be mine.
I ne'er can find a brighter, happier fate;
And fate will come at laſt, inglorious fate!
O grudge me not a portion of thy fame!
As join'd in love, O raiſe me to thy glory!

EDWARD.

In vain is all thy eloquence. The more
Thou wouldſt perſuade, I, with encreaſing horror,
Fly from thy purpoſe.

ELEONORA.

Doſt thou love me, *Edward*?

EDWARD.

EDWARD.

Oh!—If I love thee?—Witneſs heaven and earth!
Angels of death that hover round me, witneſs!
Witneſs theſe blinded eyes, theſe trembling arms,
This heart that beats unutterable fondneſs,
To what an agony I love thee——

ELEONORA.

Then
Thou ſure wilt ſave me from the worſt of pains.

EDWARD.

O that I could from all engroſs thy ſufferings!
Pain felt for thee were pleaſure!

ELEONORA.

Hear me, *Edward.*
I ſpeak the ſtricteſt truth, no flight of paſſion,
I ſpeak my naked heart.—To die, I own,
Is a dread paſſage, terrible to nature,
Chiefly to thoſe who have, like me, been happy.—
But to ſurvive thee—O 'tis greatly worſe!
'Tis a continual death! I cannot bear
The very thought—O leave me not behind thee!

EDWARD.

Since nought can alter my determin'd breaſt,
Why doſt thou pierce me with this killing image?

ELEONORA.

Ah! ſelfiſh that thou art! with thee the toil,
The tedious toil of life will ſoon be o'er;
Thou ſoon wilt hide thee in the quiet grave:
While I, a lonely widow, with my orphans,

Am-

Am left defenceleſs to a troubled world,
A falſe, ungrateful, and injurious world!——
Oh! if thou lov'ſt me *Edward*, I conjure thee,
By that celeſtial flame which blends our ſouls!
By all a father, all a mother feels!
By every holy tenderneſs, I charge thee!
Live to protect the pledges of our love,
Our children!—

EDWARD.

Oh!—

ELEONORA.

Our young, our helpleſs—

EDWARD.

Oh!—
Diſtraction!—Let me go!

ELEONORA.

Nay, drag me with thee——
To the kind tomb—Thou canſt not leave our children!
Expos'd, by being thine, beyond the loweſt!
Surrounded with the perils of a throne!—

EDWARD.

Cruel! no more embitter thus our laſt,
Our parting moments! Set no more the terrors
Of theſe beſt paſſions in array againſt me!
For by that power, I ſwear, father of life!
Whoſe univerſal love embraces all
That breathes this ample air; whoſe perfect wiſdom
Brings light from darkneſs, and from evil good;

To

To whom I recommend thee, and my children:
By him I ſwear! I never will ſubmit
To what thy horrid tenderneſs propoſes!

GLOSTER.

My lord—

EDWARD.

Oh!—theſe emotions are too much—
I feel a heavy languor ſteal upon me:
The working poiſon clogs the ſprings of life.
Conduct me to my couch—Ah! *Eleonora!*
If we ne'er meet again—This one embrace—
Yet ſink not to deſpair—Heaven may preſerve me
By means ſuperiour to all human hope.

ELEONORA.

I will not, cannot quit thee!—

SCENE V.

ELEONORA, DARAXA.

DARAXA.

Princeſs, ſtay.
Think not the hand of death is yet upon him,
Reſiſtleſs ſleep will firſt oppreſs his ſenſes,
Before the laſt convulſive pangs come on;
For ſo the numming poiſon oft begins
To ſpread its dark malignity.—

ELEONORA.

ELEONORA.

Ha!—Sleep!
Then is the time—Thanks to inſpiring heaven!
But come, and ere the venom ſink too deep,
Swift let me ſeize the favouring hour of ſleep.

End of the Second Act.

ACT III. SCENE I.

GLOSTER.

O Miracle of love! O wond'rous princeſs!
'Tis ſuch as thou, who keep the gentle flame,
That animates ſociety, alive,
Who make the dwellings of mankind delightful.
What is vain life? an idle flight of days,
A ſtill-deluſive round of ſickly joys,
A ſcene of little cares and trifling paſſions,
If not ennobled by ſuch deeds of virtue?
And yet this matchleſs virtue! what avails it?
Th' afflicting angel has forſook the prince,
And now pours out his terrors on the princeſs.
Forſook him, ſaid I?—No; he muſt awake
To keener evils than the body knows,
Which minds alone, and generous minds can feel.
O virtue! virtue! as thy joys excel,
So are thy woes tranſcendent; the groſs world
Knows not the bliſs or miſery of either—
The prince forſakes his couch—He ſeems renew'd
In health—Ah, ſhort deceitful gleam of eaſe!

SCENE

SCENE II.

EDWARD, GLOSTER.

EDWARD, *advancing from his couch.*

Hail to the freſher earth and brighter day!
I feel me lighten'd of the mortal load
That lay upon my ſpirits. This kind ſleep
Has ſhed a balmy quiet thro' my veins.
Whence this amazing change?——
But be my firſt chief care, author of good!
To bend my ſoul in gratitude to thee!
Thou, when blind mortals wander thro' the deeps
Of comfortleſs deſpair, with timely hand,
Inviſible, and by unthought-of ways,
Thus lead'ſt them forth into thy light again.

GLOSTER.

How fares my lord, the prince?

EDWARD.

To health reſtor'd.
Only a kind of laſſitude remains,
A not unpleaſing weakneſs hangs upon me:
Like the ſoft trembling of the ſettled deep,
After a ſtorm.

GLOSTER.

Father of health be prais'd!

EDWARD.

EDWARD.

The moment that I ſunk upon my couch,
A ſick and troubled ſlumber fell upon me;
Chaos of gloomy unconnected thought!
That, in black eddy whirl'd, made ſleep more dreadful
Than the worſt waking pang. While thus I toſs'd,
Ready to bid farewel to ſuffering clay,
Methought an angel came and touch'd my wound.
At this the parting gloom clear'd up apace;
My ſlumbers ſoften'd; and, with health, return'd
Serenity of mind, and order'd thought,
And fair ideas gladdening all the ſoul.
Aerial muſic too, by fancy heard,
Sooth'd my late pangs and harmoniz'd my breaſt.
Thro' ſhades of bliſs I walk'd, where heavenly forms
Sung to their lutes my *Eleonora*'s love—
But where is ſhe? the glory of her ſex!
O dearer, juſtly dearer, far than ever!
Quick, let me find her, pour into her boſom
My full full ſoul, with tenderneſs o'ercharg'd,
With glad ſurpriſe, with gratitude and wonder.—
Ha! why this ſilence? this dejected look?
You caſt a drooping eye upon the ground.
Where is the princeſs?

GLOSTER.

She, my lord, repoſes.

EDWARD.

Repoſes!—No!—It is not likely, *Gloſter*,

That

That ſhe would yield her weeping eyes to ſleep,
While I lay there in agonies—away!
I am too feeble then to know the truth.
Say, is ſhe well?

GLOSTER.

Now ſhow thy courage, *Edward*——

EDWARD.

O all my fears! I ſhall ſtart out to madneſs!
What!—while I ſlept?

GLOSTER.

Yes——

EDWARD.

Miſery! diſtraction!
My peace, my honour is betray'd for ever!
O love! O ſhame! O murder'd *Eleonora!*

SCENE III.

GLOSTER.

Unhappy prince! go find thy *Eleonora*,
And in heart-eaſing grief exhale thy paſſion:
All other comfort, now, were to talk down
The winds and raging ſeas.—But yonder comes
Th' *Arabian* princeſs. From her tears I learn
The moving ſcene within.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

GLOSTER, DARAXA, *a meſſenger from* SELIM, *attending at ſome diſtance.*

DARAXA.

O! 'tis too much!
I can no more ſupport it.

GLOSTER.

Generous mourner,
How is it with the princeſs *Eleonora?*

DARAXA.

Struck by the poiſon on her couch ſhe lies,
A roſe ſoft-drooping in *Sabean* vales,
Beneath the fiery dog-ſtar's noxious rage.
O Chriſtian chief, I never ſhall forget
The ſcene theſe melting eyes have juſt beheld,
With mingled tears of tenderneſs and wonder.

GLOSTER.

How was it, madam?

DARAXA.

When this pride of women,
This beſt of wives, which in his radiant courſe
The ſun beholds, when firſt ſhe, ſickening, felt
Th' imperious ſummons of approaching fate,
All rob'd in ſpotleſs white ſhe ſought her altars;
And, proſtrate there, for her departing ſoul,

The

The prince her huſband, and her orphan-children,
Implor'd th' Eternal Mind.—As yet ſhe held
Her ſwelling tears, and in her boſom kept
Her ſighs repreſs'd: nor did the near approach
Of the pale king of terrors dim her beauty;
No, rather adding to her charms, it breath'd
A certain mournful ſweetneſs thro' her features.
But as th' increaſing bane more deſperate grew,
Wild to her bed ſhe ruſh'd, and then, indeed,
The lovely fountains of her eyes were open'd,
Then flow'd her tears.—"Connubial bed, ſhe cry'd,
"Chaſte witneſs of my tenderneſs for him,
"To ſave whoſe life I unrepining die
"In bloom of youth, farewel!—Thou ſhalt, perhaps,
"Receive a fairer, a more happy bride;
"But never a more faithful, never one
"Who loves her huſband with a fonder paſſion."
Here flow'd her tears afreſh; with burning lip
She preſs'd the humid couch, and wept again.
At laſt, while weary ſorrow paus'd, ſhe roſe,
And, fearing leſt immediate death might ſeize her,
Demanded to be led to ſee the prince;
But fear of chaſing from his eyes, too ſoon,
The ſalutary ſleep that heal'd his pangs,
Reſtrain'd her trembling footſteps. On her couch,
Abandon'd to deſpair, ſhe ſunk anew,
And for her children call'd. Her children came.
A while, ſupported on her arm, ſhe ey'd them,
With tears purſuing tears a-down her cheek,

With

With all the ſpeechleſs miſery of woe——
I ſee her ſtill—O God!—the powerful image
Diſſolves me into tears!

GLOSTER.

Madam, proceed.
Such tears are virtue, and excel the joys
Of wanton pride.

DARAXA.

Then ſtarting up ſhe went
To ſnatch them to a mother's laſt embrace;
When ſtrait reflecting that the piercing poiſon
Might taint their tender years, ſhe ſudden ſhrunk
With horror back—"O wretched *Eleonora!*
" (She weeping cry'd) and muſt I then not taſte
" The poor remaining comfort of the dying,
" To ſee a huſband, claſp my deareſt children,
" And mix my parting ſoul with theirs I love?"
Her ſad attendants, that till then had mourn'd
In ſilent ſorrow, all, at This, gave way
To loud laments—She rais'd her languid eye,
And caſting on them round a gracious ſmile,
To each by name ſhe call'd, even to the loweſt,
To each extended mild her friendly hand,
Gave, and, by turns, receiv'd a laſt farewel.
Such is the dreadful ſcene from which I come.

GLOSTER.

How heighten'd now with *Edward*'s mingled woes!
Why are my lingering years reſerv'd for this?

DARAXA.

DARAXA.

Come nearer, you, the meſſenger of *Selim*,
And bear him back this anſwer—His chief aim,
He ſays, in ſtooping to ſolicite peace,
Was from the chains of infidels to ſave me.
What! was it then to reſcue me he ſent,
Beneath an all-rever'd and ſacred name,
Beneath the ſhelter of his hand and ſeal,
A murdering wretch, a ſacrilegious bigot,
To ſtab at once the gallant prince of *England*,
And public faith? nay, with a poiſon'd dagger
(Such his inhuman cowardice) to ſtab him?
So well, 'tis true, he judg'd; the chriſtian prince
Had now been mingled with the harmleſs dead;
If his bright princeſs, glorious *Eleonora*,
Had not redeem'd his dearer life with hers.
You heard in what extremity ſhe lies.
Go, tell the tyrant then—O heaven and earth!
O vanity of virtue! that *Daraxa*
Should e'er to *Selim* ſend ſo fell a meſſage———.
I will ſuppreſs its bitterneſs—Yet tell him,
This crime has plac'd eternal bars betwixt us.
See my laſt tear to love—*Arabian* wilds
Shall bury 'midſt their rocks the loſt *Daraxa*.
Away!

GLOSTER.

Behold, they bear this way the princeſs,
Once more to taſte the ſweetneſs of the ſun,
Ere yet to mortal light ſhe bid farewel.

SCENE

SCENE V.

GLOSTER, DARAXA, THEALD, EDWARD, ELEONORA *born in by her attendants on a couch.*

ELEONORA, *entering.*

A little on, a little further on,
Bear me, my friends, into the cooling air.
O chearful ſun! O vital light of day!

EDWARD.

That ſun is witneſs of our matchleſs woes,
Is witneſs of our innocence——Alas!
What have we done to merit this diſaſter?

ELEONORA.

O earth! O genial roofs! O the dear coaſt
Of *Albion*'s iſle! which I no more ſhall ſee!—

EDWARD.

Nay, yield not to thy weakneſs, *Eleonora!*
Suſtain thyſelf a little, nor deſert me!
Th' all-ruling Goodneſs may relieve us ſtill.

ELEONORA.

Edward! I tremble! terror ſeizes on me!
Thro' the rent veil of yon ſurrounding ſky,
I had a glimpſe, I ſaw th' eternal world.
They call, they urge me hence—Yes, I obey.
But O forgive me, heaven! if 'tis with pain,
With agonies, I tear my ſoul from his!

EDWARD.

Heavens! what I ſuffer!—How thy plaintive voice
Shoots anguiſh through my ſoul!

ELEONORA.

Some power unſeen—
Thy hand, my *Edward*—ſome dark power unſeen
Is dragging me away—O yet a little,
A little, ſpare me!—Ah! how ſhall I leave
My weeping friends, my huſband and my children?

EDWARD.

Unhappy friends! O greatly wretched huſband!
And O poor careleſs orphans, who not feel
The depth of your misfortune!

ELEONORA.

Lay me down;
Soft, lay me down—my powers are all diſſolv'd—
A little forward bend me—Oh!

EDWARD.

O heav'n!
How that ſoft frame is torn with cruel pangs!
Pangs robb'd from me!

ELEONORA.

'Tis thence they borrow eaſe—
My children! O my children! you no more
Have now a mother; now, alas! no more
Have you a mother, O my hapleſs children!

EDWARD.

What do I hear! What deſolating words
Are theſe? more bitter than a thouſand deaths!

Death

Death to my ſoul! Call up thy failing ſpirit,
And leave me not to miſery and ruin!

ELEONORA.

Edward, I feel an interval of eaſe;
And, ere I die, have ſomething to impart
That will relieve my ſufferings.

EDWARD.

Speak, my ſoul!
Speak thy deſire: I live but to fulfil it.

ELEONORA.

Thou ſeeſt in what a hopeleſs ſtate I lie,
I who this morning roſe in pride of youth,
High-blooming, promis'd many happy years.
I die for thee, I ſelf-devoted die.
Think not, from this, that I repent my vow:
Or that, with little vanity, I boaſt it:
No; what I did from unrepenting love
I chearful did, from love that knows no fear,
No pain, no weak remiſſion of its ardor.
And what, alas! what was it but the dictate
Of honour and of duty? nay, 'twas ſelfiſh,
To ſave me from unſufferable pain,
From dragging here a wretched life without thee.
Two fears yet ſtand betwixt my ſoul and peace.
One is for thee, leſt thou diſturb my grave
With tears of wild deſpair. Grieve not like thoſe
Who have no hope. We yet ſhall meet again;
We ſtill are in a kind Creator's hand;
Eternal Goodneſs reigns. Beſides, this parting,

This parting, *Edward*, muſt have come at laſt,
When years of friendſhip had, perhaps, exalted
Our love, if that can be, to keener anguiſh.
Think what thy ſtation, what thy fame demanded;
Nor yield thy virtue even to worthy paſſions.
My other care—my other care is idle—
From that thy equal tenderneſs with mine,
Thy love and generoſity ſecure me.
Our children——

EDWARD.

Yes, I penetrate thy fear.
But hear me, dying ſweetneſs! On this hand,
This cold pale hand I vow, our children never,
Shall never call another by the name
Sacred to thee; my *Eleonora*'s children
Shall never feel the hateful power thou fear'ſt.
As one in life, ſo death cannot divide us.
Nor high deſcent, nor beauty, nought that woman,
In her unbounded vanity of heart,
Can wiſh, ſhall ever tempt my faith from thee.
Shall ever, ſaid I? Piteous boaſt indeed!
O nothing can!—I ſhould be groſs of heart,
Taſteleſs, and dull as earth, to think with patience,
Without abhorrence, of a ſecond *Hymen*.
Where can I find ſuch beauty? Where ſuch grace,
The ſoul of beauty? Where ſuch winning charms?
Where ſuch a ſoft divinity of goodneſs?
Such faith? ſuch love? ſuch tenderneſs unequal'd?
Such all that heaven could give—to make me wretched!

Talk

Talk not of comfort—Into what a gulph
A lone abyſs of miſery I fall,
The moment that I loſe thee—Oh! I know not!
I dare not think!—But theſe unhappy orphans—
Ah the dire cauſe that makes it double duty——
Shall now be doubly mine; to ſhelter them,
Theſe pledges of our love, I will attempt
To brave the horrors of loath'd life without thee.

ELEONORA.

Enough! it is enough! On this condition
Receive them from my hands.

EDWARD.

Dear hands! dear gift!
Dear, precious, dying, miſerable gift!
With tranſport once receiv'd, but now with anguiſh!

ELEONORA.

All-ſoft'ning time will heal my woes. The dead
Soon leave the paſſions of the living free.

EDWARD.

Deteſted life!—O take me, take me with thee!

ELEONORA.

No, *Edward*, live: or elſe I die in vain.

EDWARD.

Raiſe, raiſe, my *Eleonora*, thy ſweet eyes,
Once more behold thy children—

ELEONORA.

Oh!—'Tis darkneſs—
A deadly weight ——

EDWARD.

Thou leav'ſt me then for ever!

ELEONORA.

Where am I?—Ah—a tenant ſtill to pain.
The quivering flame of life heaps up a little.
Meantime, my *Edward*, 'tis my laſt requeſt,
That thou would'ſt leave me, while I yet enjoy
A parting gleam of thought--Leave me to Heaven!—
Gloſter—farewel—Be careful of the prince—
Attend him hence—and double now thy friendſhip!

EDWARD.

Barbarian! off!—Ah! whither would'ſt thou drag me!

GLOSTER.

My lord, in pity to the princeſs—

EDWARD.

Oh!

ELEONORA.

Farewel! farewel!—Receive my laſt adieu,
Edward! my deareſt lord! farewel for ever!

EDWARD.

O word of horror!—Can I?—No! I cannot!
There, take me, lead me, hurl me to perdition!

SCENE VI.

ELEONORA, DARAXA, THEALD, *Attendants.*

ELEONORA.

'Tis paſt, the bitterneſs of death is paſt——
Alas! *Daraxa*, I can ne'er requite
Thy generous cares for me. Thou art the cauſe
My *Edward* lives, my children have a father,

Thy

Thy heaven-inſpir'd propoſal—Tell him, *Theald*,
That, in the troubled moments of our parting,
I had forgot to beg he would reſtore
Th' *Arabian* princeſs to her friends and country—
Thy hand—This ſure, howe'er in faith we differ,
Humanity, the ſoul of all religion,
May well permit.

DARAXA.

By virtue's ſacred fire!
Our paradiſe, the garden of the bleſt,
Ne'er ſmil'd upon a purer ſoul than thine.
For me, think not of me; ſuch are my woes,
That I diſdain all care, deteſt relief:
My name is trod in duſt; thine beams for ever,
The richeſt gem that crowns the worth of woman.

ELEONORA.

The guilt of *Selim* cannot ſtain thy virtues:
It rather lends them luſtre—Bear me back,
My dear attendants: and good *Theald*, come,
Come, aid my mounting ſoul to ſpring away,
From the lov'd fetters of this kindred clay.

End of the Third Act.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

THEALD, *and a gentleman belonging to him.*

THEALD.

TO me a derviſe? Thro' the furious camp,
Yet raging at the perfidy of *Selim*,
How did he ſafely paſs?

GENTLEMAN.

Sir, he had fallen
A victim to their vengeance: but he told them,
His life was of importance to the prince,
That he who ſtruck him ſtabb'd the heart of *Edward*,
This ſtay'd their rage; then, after a ſtrict ſearch,
They let him paſs thro' ranks of glaring eyes.
I have beſides to ſay, an *Engliſh* ſhip
And one from *Italy* are juſt arriv'd:
The firſt brings great diſpatches to prince *Edward*;
The other, *holy father*, theſe to you. [*Kneeling.*

THEALD.

Go, bid this derviſe enter.

SCENE

SCENE II.

THEALD: *he opens and looks on the diſpatches.*

Awful Heaven!
Great ruler of the various heart of man!
Since thou haſt rais'd me to conduct thy church,
Without the baſe cabal too often practis'd,
Beyond my wiſh, my thought, give me the lights,
The virtues which that ſacred truſt requires:
A loving, lov'd, unterrifying power,
Such as becomes a father; humble wiſdom;
Plain, primitive ſincerity; kind zeal,
For truth and virtue rather than opinions;
And, above all, the charitable ſoul
Of healing peace and Chriſtian moderation.
The *derviſe* comes.

SCENE III.

THEALD, SELIM *diſguis'd as a derviſe.*

THEALD.

With me, what would'ſt thou, derviſe?

SELIM.

The princeſs *Eleonora* lives ſhe ſtill?

THEALD.

She lives, and that is all.

SELIM.

Allah be prais'd!
Then lives the honour of the brightning name
Of *Saracen* and *Muſſulman*.

THEALD.

How, derviſe?
What can wipe out the horror of this deed?

SELIM.

The deed was execrable; but my hand
This inſtant ſhall prevent its dire effect.
I bring a certain remedy for poiſon;
Nor can it come too late; while wandering life
Yet, with faint impulſe, ſtirs along the veins.

THEALD.

Ha! derviſe, art thou ſure of what thou ſay'ſt?

SELIM.

Chriſtian I am; and therefore am I here.
Haſte, lead me to the princeſs: tho' ſhe lay
Even in the laſt extremity, tho' call'd
By the fierce angel who compels the dead,
Yet bold experience gives me room to hope.
Oft have I ſeen its vital touch diffuſe
New vigour thro' the poiſon'd ſtreams of life,
When almoſt ſettled into dead ſtagnation;
Swift as a ſouthern gale unbinds the flood.
Say, wilt thou truſt me with the trial, Chriſtian?

THEALD.

THEALD.

Thou know'ſt, we have great reaſon for diſtruſt;
But fear in thoſe who can no longer hope,
Were idle and abſurd.

SELIM.

Bright heaven! what fear?
Is there a ſlave of ſuch inhuman baſeneſs
To add freſh outrage to a dying princeſs?
For virtue dying? look into my eye:
Does one weak ray there ſhun the keeneſt gaze?
Say, doſt thou there behold ſo foul a bottom?

THEALD.

No; ſeeming truth and generous candour ſhine
In what thou ſay'ſt. Come, follow me, good derviſe.

SCENE IV.

THEALD, SELIM *diſguis'd*, DARAXA.

DARAXA.

At laſt, thro' various pangs the dying princeſs
Sees the delivering moment, and demands
Thy preſence, reverend Chriſtian.

THEALD.

Derviſe, come.
Forbid it heaven this aid ſhould be too late!

SCENE V.

DARAXA.

Heaven! can it be! the very face of *Selim!*
'Tis he himself—I know him, 'tis the ſultan;
And, as he ſhot athwart me, from his eye
Flaſh'd the proud lightning of affronted virtue.
He muſt be innocent; his being here
Is radiant proof he muſt—O weak DARAXA!
What man of virtue more would deign to lodge
His image in thy breaſt? Ah! what avails
The light unfounded love, the treacherous friendſhip,
That, with inhuman cowardice, gives up
A worthy man, to infamy and ſlander?
They talk'd of aid—what aid?

[*A cry heard within.*

Alas! 'tis paſt!
Death muſt be in that cry. O let me fly
To ſnatch one parting look; but ſee the prince
Rous'd by the ſounds of ſorrow this way comes.
Unhappy prince! I venerate his tears—
O gracious Allah! pity and ſupport him. [*Exit.*

SCENE

SCENE VI.

EDWARD.

That cry was death: Alas! she is no more!
The matchleſs *Eleonora* is no more!—
Where am I?—Heavens!—Ah! what a hideous deſart
Is now this world, this blaſted world around me!
O ſun, I hate thee, I abhor thy light,
That ſhews not *Eleonora!* Earth, thy joy,
Thy ſweetneſs all is fled, all all that made
Thy ways to me delightful, *Eleonora!*
O *Eleonora!* perish'd *Eleonora!*
For ever loſt!—That tent! ah me! that tent!
[Going into the tent ſtarts back.
I dare not enter there. There death diſplays
His utmoſt terrors—Pale and lifeleſs, there,
She lies, whoſe looks were love, whoſe beauty ſmil'd
The ſweet effulgence of endearing virtue—
And here I laſt beheld her—Ay, and how,
And how beheld her!—The remorſeleſs image
Will hunt me to the grave—I ſee her ſuffering,
With female ſoftneſs yet to pain ſuperior,
Fearful and bold at once, with the ſtrong hand
Of mighty love conſtraining feeble nature,
To ſteal me from affliction—Let me fly
This fatal ground—But whither ſhall I fly?
To *England*—O I cannot bear the thought
Of e'er returning to that country more!

That

That country, witneſs of our happy days,
Where at each ſtep remember'd bliſs will ſting
My ſoul to anguiſh. I already hear
Malice exclaim, nay, bluſhing valour ſigh:
Where is thy princeſs? where the wiſh of thouſands?
The charm, the tranſport of the public eye?
Baſe prince! And art thou not aſham'd to bring
No trophy home but *Eleonora*'s corſe?—
The grave too is ſhut up, that laſt retreat
Of wretched mortals—Yes, my word is paſs'd,
To *Eleonora* paſs'd. Our orphan-children
Bind me to life—O dear, O dangerous paſſions!
The valiant, in himſelf, what can he ſuffer?
Or what does he regard his ſingle woes?
But when, alas, he multiplies himſelf
To dearer ſelves, to the lov'd tender fair,
To thoſe whoſe bliſs, whoſe beings hang upon him,
To helpleſs children! then, O then! he feels
The point of miſery feſtring in his heart,
And weakly weeps his fortune like a coward.
Such, ſuch am I! undone!—

SCENE

SCENE VII.

EDWARD, GLOSTER.

EDWARD.

My lord of *Gloſter*,
I thought my orders were to be alone.

GLOSTER.

Forgive my fond intruſion—But I cannot
Be ſo regardleſs of thy welfare, *Edward*,
As to obey theſe orders.

EDWARD.

But they ſhall,
Shall be obeyed—I will enjoy my ſorrows,
All that is left me now.

GLOSTER.

The more thy grief,
Juſt in its cauſe but frantic in degree,
Seeks aggravating ſolitude, the more
It ſuits my love and duty to attend thee,
To try to ſooth—

EDWARD.

Away! thou never ſhalt.
Not all that idle wiſdom can ſuggeſt,
All the vain talk of proud unfeeling reaſon,
Shall rob me of one tear.

GLOSTER.

Of nature's tears
I would

I would not rob thee: they invigorate virtue,
Soften, at once, and fortify the heart;
But when they riſe to ſpeak this deſperate language,
They then grow tears of weakneſs; yes—

EDWARD.

I care not!
Weakneſs, whate'er they be, I will indulge them.
Will, in deſpite of thee and all mankind,
Devote my joyleſs days for ever to them.

GLOSTER.

Reaſon and virtue then are empty names?

EDWARD.

Hence! leave me to my fate—You have undone me;
You have made ſhipwreck of my peace, among you,
My happineſs and honour; and I now
Roam the deteſted world, a careleſs wretch!

GLOSTER.

Thy honour yet is ſafe, how long I know not,
For full it drives upon the rocks of paſſion.
O all ye pitying powers that rule mankind!
Who ſo unworthy but may proudly deck him
With this fair-weather virtue, that exults,
Glad, o'er the ſummer main? The tempeſt comes,
The rough winds rage aloud; when from the helm
This virtue ſhrinks, and in a corner lies
Lamenting.—Heavens! if privileg'd from trial,
How cheap a thing were virtue!

EDWARD.

Do—inſult me—

Rail,

Rail, ſpare me not—rail, *Gloſter*, all the world—
But know, mean time, thou canſt not make me feel thee—
I have no more connection with mankind.

GLOSTER.

Inſult thee, *Edward*? Do theſe tears inſult thee?
Theſe old man's tears!—Friendſhip, my prince, can weep,
As well as love—But while I weep thy fortune,
Let me not weep thy virtue ſunk beneath it—
Thou haſt no more connection with mankind?
Put off thy craving ſenſes, the deep wants
And infinite dependencies of nature;
Put off that ſtrongeſt paſſion of the ſoul,
Soul of the ſoul, love to ſociety;
Put off all gratitude for what is paſt,
All generous hope of what is yet to come;
Put off each ſenſe of honour and of duty:
Then uſe this language—Let me tell thee, *Edward*,
Thou haſt connections with mankind, and great ones,
Thou know'ſt not of; connections! that might rouſe
The ſmalleſt ſpark of honour in thy breaſt,
To wide-awaken'd life and fair ambition.

EDWARD.

What doſt thou mean?

GLOSTER.

What mean?—this day, in *England*,
How many aſk of *Paleſtine* their king,
Edward their king?—Read theſe—

EDWARD,

EDWARD, *opening the diſpatches.*

O *Gloſter!—Gloſter!*—

Alas! my royal father is no more!
The gentleſt of mankind, the moſt abus'd!
Of gracious nature, a fit ſoil for virtues,
'Till there his creatures ſow'd their flattering lies,
And made him—No, not all their curſed arts
Could ever make him inſolent or cruel.
O my deluded father! Little joy
Hadſt thou in life, led from thy real good,
And genuine glory, from thy people's love,
That nobleſt aim of kings, by ſmiling traitors.
Thus weak of heart, thus deſolate of ſoul,
Ah, how unfit am I, with ſteady hand,
To rule a troubled ſtate!—She, ſhe is gone,
Softner of care, the dear reward of toil,
The ſource of virtue! She, who to a crown
Had lent new ſplendor, who had grac'd a throne
Like the ſweet ſeraph mercy tempering juſtice.
O *Eleonora!* any life with thee,
The plaineſt could have charm'd: but pomp and pleaſure,
All that a loving people can beſtow,
By thee unſhar'd, will only ſerve to fret
The wounds of woe, and make me more unhappy!

GLOSTER.

Now is the time, now lift thy ſoul to virtue!
Behold a criſis, ſent by heaven, to ſave thee.
Whate'er, my prince, can touch, or can command,
Can quicken or exalt the heart of man,

Now

Now ſpeaks to thine—Thy children claim their father,
Nay, more than father, claim their double parent;
For ſuch thy promiſe was to *Eleonora:*
Thy ſubjects claim their king, thy troops their chief:
The manes of thy anceſtors conſign
Their long deſcended glory to thy hands;
And thy dejected country calls upon thee
To ſave her, raiſe her, to reſtore her honour,
To ſpread her ſure dominion o'er the deep,
And bid her yet ariſe the ſcourge of *France.*
Angels themſelves might envy thee the joy,
That waits thy will, of doing general good:
Of ſpreading virtue, chearing lonely worth;
Of daſhing down the proud; of guarding arts,
The ſacred rights of induſtry and freedom;
Of making a whole generous people happy.
O *Edward! Edward!* the moſt piercing tranſports
Of the beſt love can never equal theſe!
And need I add—Thy *Eleonora*'s death
Calls out for vengeance—

EDWARD.

Ha!

GLOSTER.

If thou, indeed,
Doſt honour thus her memory, then ſhew it,
Not by ſoft tears and womaniſh complaints,
But ſhew it like a man!—

EDWARD.

I will!

GLOSTER.

GLOSTER.

Yon towers!—

EDWARD.

'Tis true!

GLOSTER.

Yon guilty towers!—

EDWARD.

Inſult us ſtill!

GLOSTER.

The murderer of thy princeſs riots there!—

EDWARD.

But ſhall not long!—Thou art my better genius,
Thou brave old man! thou haſt recall'd my virtue—
I was benumb'd with ſorrow—what—or where—
I know not—never to have thought of this.
Bright virtue, welcome! vigour of the mind!
The flame from heaven that lights up higher being!
Thrice welcome! with thy noble ſervant anger,
And juſt revenge—Hence, let us to the camp,
And there transfuſe our ſoul into the troops.
This ſultan's blood will eaſe my fever'd breaſt.
Yes, I will take ſuch vengeance on this city,
That all mankind ſhall turn their eyes to *Jaffa*;
And as they ſee her turrets ſunk in duſt,
Shall learn to dread the terrors of the juſt.

End of the Fourth Act.

ACT

ACT V. SCENE I.

SELIM.

O My *Daraxa!* thou haſt charm'd my ſoul!
This reconciling interview has ſooth'd
My troubled boſom into tender joy:
As when the ſpring firſt, on the ſoften'd top
Of *Lebanon*, unbinds her lovely treſſes,
And ſhakes her blooming ſweets from *Carmel*'s brow—
It only now remains to ſee the prince.——

SCENE II.

SELIM, THEALD.

THEALD.

I ſought thee, worthy derviſe.

SELIM.

Reverend Chriſtian,
My toiling thoughts can find no fix'd repoſe,
'Till the wrong'd ſultan's vindicated honour

Shine

Shine out as bright as yon unſully'd ſky.
Conduct me to the prince—I claim that juſtice.—
It ſtings my conſcious ſoul with ſick impatience,
To think what *Selim* ſuffers. For a man,
Who loves the ways of truth and open virtue,
To lye beneath the burning imputation
Of baſeneſs and of crimes—ſuch horrid crimes!—
O 'tis a keen unſufferable torment!
Come, let me then diſcharge this other part
Of my commiſſion.

THEALD.

That thou ſoon ſhalt do.
He ſtrait will come this way, the king of *England*,
Such now he is. Mean time, 'tis fit to tell thee,
He muſt be manag'd gently; for his paſſions
Are all abroad, in wild confuſion hurl'd:
The winds, the floods, and lightning mix together.
I need not ſay how little, in this uproar,
Avails the broken thwarted light of reaſon.

SELIM.

Fear not.—I truſt in innocence, and truth.

THEALD.

He cannot long delay, for, as I enter'd,
I ſaw him parting from the hurried camp,
That lighten'd wide around him: burniſh'd helms,
And glittering ſpears, and ardent thronging ſoldiers,
Demanding all the ſignal, when to ſtorm
Theſe walls devoted to their vengeance.—

SELIM.

SELIM.

Ha!

Then let us quickly find him—But he comes.

SCENE III.

SELIM, THEALD, EDWARD, GLOSTER.

EDWARD.

Whence is it thoſe barbarians, here again,
Thoſe baſe, thoſe murdering cowards, dare be ſeen?
What new acceurs'd attempt is now on foot?
What new aſſaſſination?—Start not, derviſe,
Tinge not thy caitiff cheek with red'ning honour.
What thou!—Doſt thou pretend to feel reproach?
Art thou not of a ſhameleſs race of people,
Harden'd in arts of cruelty and blood,
Perfidious all? Yes, have you not profan'd
The faith of nations? broke the holy tie
That binds the families of earth together,
That gives even foes to meet with generous truſt,
And teaches war ſecurity? Your prince,
Your prince has done it! And you ſhould hereafter
Be hunted from your dens like ſavage beaſts,
Be cruſh'd like ſerpents!

THEALD.

Sir, this derviſe comes,
To clear the ſultan *Selim* from that crime,

Which

Which you, with ſtrong appearance, charge upon him.

EDWARD.

Appearance, *Theald!* with unqueſtion'd proof.
Doubtleſs the villain would be glad to change
The courſe by nature fix'd, enjoy his crimes
Without their evil—But he ſhall not ſcape me!

SELIM.

If, king of *England*, in this weighty matter,
On which depends the weal and life of thouſands,
You love and ſeek the truth, let reaſon judge;
Cool, ſteady, quiet, and diſpaſſion'd reaſon.
For never yet, ſince the proud ſelfiſh race
Of men began to jar, did paſſion give,
Nor ever can it give, a right deciſion.

EDWARD.

Reaſon has judg'd, and paſſion ſhall chaſtiſe,
Shall make you howl, ye cowards of the *Eaſt!*
What can be clearer? This vile prince of *Jaffa!*
This infamy of princes! Sends a ruffian,
By his own hand and ſeal commiſſion'd, ſends him,
To treat of peace: and, as I read his letters,
The villain ſtabs me—This, if this wants light,
There is no certainty in human reaſon;
If this not ſhines with all-convincing truth,
Yon ſun is dark—And yet theſe cowards come
With lying ſhifts, and low eluſive arts—
O it inflames my anger into madneſs!
This added inſult on our underſtanding,
This treacherous attempt to ſteal away

The

The only joy and treaſure of my life,
Sweet ſacred vengeance for my murder'd princeſs.

SELIM.

The curſed wretch who did aſſail thy life,
O king of *England*, was indeed an envoy
Sent by the prince of *Jaffa*: This we own.
But then he was an execrable bigot,
Who, for ſuch horrid purpoſes, had crept
Into the cheated ſultan's court and ſervice,
As by the traitor's papers we have learn'd.
For know, there lives, upon the craggy cliffs
Of wild *Phenician* mountains, a dire race,
A nation of aſſaſſins. Dreadful zeal,
Fierce and intolerant of all religion
That differs from their own, is the black ſoul
Of that infernal ſtate. Soon as their chief,
The old man (ſo they ſtile him) of the mountains,
Gives out his baleful will, however fell,
However wicked and abhorr'd it be,
Tho' cloth'd in danger, the moſt cruel death,
They, ſwift and ſilent, glide thro' every land,
As fly the gloomy miniſters of vengeance,
Famine and plague; they lye for years conceal'd,
Make light of oaths, nay, ſometimes change religion,
And never fail to execute his orders.
Of theſe the villain was, theſe ruffian ſaints,
The curſe of earth, the terror of mankind:
And thy engagement, prince, in this cruſado,
That was the reaſon whence they ſought thy life.

EDWARD.

False, false as hell! the lye of guilty fear!
You all are bigots, robbers, ruffians all!
It is the very genius of your nation.
Vindictive rage, the thirst of blood consumes you:
You live by rapine, thence your empire rose;
And your religion is a meer pretence
To rob and murder in the name of heaven.

SELIM.

Be patient, prince, be more humane and just.
You have your virtues, have your vices too;
And we have ours. The liberal hand of nature
Has not created us, nor any nation,
Beneath the blessed canopy of heaven,
Of such malignant clay, but each may boast
Their native virtues, and their maker's bounty.
You call us bigots.—O! canst thou with that
Reproach us, Christian prince? What brought thee hither?
What else but bigotry? What dost thou here?
What else but persecute?—The truth is great,
Greater than thou, and I will give it way;
Even thou thyself, in all thy rage, wilt hear it—
From their remotest source, these holy wars
What have they breath'd but bigotry and rapine?
Did not the first *Crusaders*, when their zeal
Should have shone out the purest, did they not,
Led by the frantic hermit who began
The murderous trade, thro' their own countries spread
The woes their vice could not reserve for ours?

Tho'

Tho' this exceeds the purport of my meſſage;
et muſt I thus inſulted in my country,
nſulted in religion, bid thee think,
O king of *England*, on the different conduct
f *Saracens* and *Chriſtians*, when beneath
our pious *Godfrey*, in the firſt cruſado,
eruſalem was ſack'd, and when beneath
Our generous *Saladin* it was retaken—
O hideous ſcene! my ſoul within me ſhrinks,
Abhorrent, from the view!--twelve thouſand wretches,
Receiv'd to mercy, void of all defence,
Truſting to plighted faith, to purchas'd ſafety,
Behold theſe naked wretches, in cold blood,
Men, women, children, murder'd, baſely murder'd!
The holy temple, which you came to reſcue,
Regorges with the barbarous profanation.
The ſtreets run diſmal torrents. Drown'd in blood
The very ſoldier ſickens at his carnage.
Couldſt thou, O ſun, behold the blaſting ſight,
And lift again thy ſacred eye on mortals?
A ruthleſs race! Who can do this, can do it,
To pleaſe the general father of mankind!
While nobler *Saladin*——

EDWARD.

Away! be gone!
With thee, vile derviſe, what have I to do?
I loſe my hour of vengeance, I debaſe me,
To hold this talk with thee.

SELIM.

While truth and reaſon
Speak from my tongue, vile derviſe as I am,
Yet am I greater than the higheſt monarch,
Who, from blind fury, grows the ſlave of paſſion.
Beſides, I come to juſtify a prince,
Howe'er in other qualities below thee,
In love of goodneſs, truth, humanity,
And honour, ſir, thy equal;—yes, thy equal!—

EDWARD.

What? how? compare me with a damn'd aſſaſſin?
A matchleſs villain!—Ha! preſumptuous derviſe!
Thou gnaw'ſt thy quivering lip—A ſmother'd paſſion
Shakes through thy frame.—What villainy is that
Thou dar'ſt not utter?—Wert thou not a wretch,
Protected by thy habit, this right hand
Should cruſh thee into atoms—Hence! away!
Go tell thy maſter that I hold him baſe,
Beyond the power of words to ſpeak his baſeneſs!
A coward! an aſſaſſinating coward!
And when I once have dragg'd him from his city,
Which I will ſtraitway do—I then will make him,
In all the gall and bitterneſs of guilt,
Grinding the vengeful ſteel betwixt his teeth,
Will make the traitor own it.

[Selim, *diſcovering himſelf.*

Never!

EDWARD.

Ha!

SELIM.

SELIM.

Thou canſt not, haughty monarch!—I am he!
I am this *Selim!* this inſulted *Selim!*
Yet clear as day, and will confound thy paſſion.

EDWARD.

Thou *Selim!*

SELIM.

I.

EDWARD.

Was ever guilt ſo bold?

SELIM.

Did ever innocence deſcend to fear?

EDWARD.

This bears ſome ſhew of honour. Wilt thou then
Decide it by the ſword?

SELIM.

I will do more——

EDWARD.

How more?

SELIM.

Decide it by ſuperior reaſon.

EDWARD.

No weak evaſions!—

SELIM.

If I not convince thee,
If by thyſelf I am not of this crime
Acquitted, then I grant thee thy demand.
Nay more, yon yielded city ſhall be thine:
For know, hot prince, I ſhould diſdain a throne,

I could not fill with honour. Were I guilty,
I ſhould not tremble at thy threatning voice;
No, 'tis myſelf I fear.

EDWARD.

What ſhall I think?

SELIM.

Hear but one witneſs, and I aſk no more,
To clear my name. The witneſs is a woman.
Her looks are truth; fair uncorrupted faith
Beams from her eyes. Thou ne'er canſt doubt ſuch beauty;
For 'tis th' expreſſion of a ſpotleſs ſoul.

EDWARD.

Curſe on thy mean luxurious eaſtern arts,
Of cowardice! Thou would'ſt ſeduce my vengeance—
But I deteſt all beauty—Barbarous ſultan!
Ah! thou haſt murder'd beauty! thy fell crime—
Haſte, *Gloſter*, haſte—in ſight of camp and city,
Prepare the liſts—Now ſhow thy ſelf a prince,
Or die in ſhameful tortures like a ſlave.

SELIM.

I came not hither or to dread thy wrath,
Or court thy mercy.

GLOSTER.

Sir, you cannot juſtly
Refuſe him his demand. The fervent ſoul
Of undiſſembled innocence, methinks,
Is felt in what he ſays. Firſt hear this perſon;
And if ſhe gives not full conviction, then,

Have

Have then recourſe to what ſhould always be
The laſt appeal of reaſonable beings,
Brute force.

EDWARD.

Well then, conduct her hither, ſultan.—

[Selim *goes out.*

Ah! my diſorder'd mind! from thought to thought,
Uncertain, toſs'd, the wreck of ſtormy paſſion!
This rage a while ſupports me; but I feel
It will deſert me ſoon, and I again
Shall ſoon relapſe to miſery and weakneſs.
O *Eleonora!* little didſt thou think,
How deeply wretched thy dire gift of life
Would make me!

SCENE IV.

EDWARD, GLOSTER, THEALD;

To them SELIM *conducting* ELEONORA, DARAXA.

SELIM.

Raiſe thy eyes, O king of *England*,
To the bright witneſs of my blameleſs honour.

EDWARD.

No; beauty ſhall no more engage my eyes,
It ſhall no more profane the ſhrine devoted

To the ſweet image of my *Eleonora!*
Let her declare her knowledge in this matter.

ELEONORA.

Will not my *Edward* bleſs me with a look?

EDWARD.

What angel borrows *Eleonora*'s voice!—
O thou pale ſhade of her I weep for ever!
Permit me thus to worſhip thee—Thou art!—
Amazing heaven!—Thou art my *Eleonora!*
My *Eleonora*'s Self! my dear, my true,
My living *Eleonora!*—What—to whom
Owe I this miracle? this better life?—
Oppreſſive joy!—owe I my *Eleonora?*

ELEONORA.

To him, that generous prince, who put his life,
His honour on the deſperate riſque to ſave me,
When in the arms of death—Depriv'd of voice,
Of motion, and of ſenſe, benum'd I lay,
My frighted train around me thought me dead,
And fill'd the tent with cries; my heart alone
Still feebly beat; but ſoon the poiſon's force
Had driv'n out life from that its laſt retreat;
If in the moment of approaching fate,
He, like my guardian angel, had not brought
An antidote of wond'rous power, by which
I am to light reſtor'd—to thee, my *Edward!*

EDWARD.

Did he, did he preſerve thee! He, whom thus
I have with ſuch inhuman pride inſulted!

O blind,

O blind, O brutiſh, O injurious rage!
They, they are wiſe, who, when they feel thy madneſs,
Seal up their lips. And canſt thou then forgive me,
Thou who haſt o'er me gain'd that nobleſt triumph,
The triumph of humanity?—Thou canſt.
'Tis eaſier for the generous to forgive
Than for offence to aſk it.

SELIM.

Uſe not, prince,
So harſh a word. More than forgive, I love
Thy noble heat, thy beautiful diſorder.
O! I am too much man, I feel, myſelf,
Too much the charming force of human paſſions,
E'er to pretend, with ſupercilious brow,
With proud affected virtue, to diſdain them.

EDWARD.

How? generous ſultan, how ſhall I requite thee?
Here—Take thy lov'd *Daraxa*, whom I meant
To have reſtor'd, when this misfortune happen'd;
But ſecret-working Heaven ordain'd her ſtay,
To ſave us all.

SELIM.

Wert thou the lord of earth,
Thou could'ſt not give me more!—my dear *Daraxa!*

EDWARD.

Hence to the camp, my *Gloſter*—Bid the ſoldiers
Forſake the trenches—Let unbounded joy
Reign, fearleſs, o'er the mingled camp and city—

Go, tell my faithful ſoldiers, that their queen
My *Eleonora* lives! A prize beyond
The chance of war to give! She lives to ſoften
My too imperious temper, and to make them,
To make my people happy!—O my ſoul!
What love e'er equall'd thine? O deareſt! beſt!
Pride of thy ſex! inimitable goodneſs!
Whenever woman henceforth ſhall be prais'd
For conjugal affection, men will ſay,
There ſhine the virtues of an *Eleonora!*
Tranſporting bliſs!—How bountiful is heaven!
Depreſſing often, but to raiſe us more.
Let never thoſe deſpair who follow virtue.
Love—gratitude—divide me—Once more, ſultan,
Forgive me, pardon my miſtaken zeal,
That left my country, croſs'd the ſtormy ſeas,
To war with thee, brave prince, to war with honour.
Now that my paſſions give me leave to think;
The hand of heaven appears in what I ſuffer'd,
My erring zeal has ſuffer'd by a zealot.

SELIM.

It does, O king. And, venerable Chriſtian,
I know thy moderation will excuſe me.
But ſince by ruling Wiſdom (who unweigh'd,
Unmeant, does nought) men are ſo various made,
So various turn'd, that in opinions, they
Muſt blindly think, or take a different way;

In

In ſpite of force, ſince judgment will be free;
Then let us in this righteous mean agree,
Let holy rage, let perſecution ceaſe;
Let the head argue, but the heart be peace;
Let all mankind in love of what is right,
In virtue and humanity unite.

End of the Fifth Act.

TRAGEDY.

Tancred and *Sigismunda.*

A

TRAGEDY.

TO HIS

ROYAL HIGHNESS

FREDERICK,

Prince of *Wales.*

SIR,

THE honour your ROYAL HIGHNESS has done me in the protection you was pleased to give to this tragedy, emboldens me to lay it now at your feet, and beg your permission to publish it under your royal patronage. The favouring and protecting of letters has been, in all ages and countries, one distinguishing mark of a great prince; and that with good reason, not only as it shews a justness of taste, and elevation

of

of mind, but as the influence of ſuch a protection, by exciting good writers to labour with more emulation in the improvement of their ſeveral talents, not a little contributes to the embelliſhment and inſtruction of ſociety. But of all the different ſpecies of writing, none has ſuch an effect upon the lives and manners of men, as the dramatic; and therefore that of all others moſt deſerves the attention of princes, who, by a judicious approbation of ſuch pieces as tend to promote all public and private virtue, may more than by any coercive methods ſecure the purity of the ſtage, and in conſequence thereof greatly advance the morals and politeneſs of their people. How eminently YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS has always extended your favour and patronage to every art and ſcience, and in a particular manner to dramatic performances, is too well known to the world for me to mention it here. Allow me only to wiſh, that what I have now

the

DEDICATION.

the honour to offer to your ROYAL HIGHNESS, may be judged not unworthy of your protection, at leaſt in the *Sentiments* which it inculcates. A warm and grateful ſenſe of your goodneſs to me makes me deſirous to ſeize every occaſion of declaring in public, with what profound reſpect and dutiful attachment, I am,

SIR,

Your ROYAL HIGHNESS's

moſt obliged,

moſt obedient, and

moſt devoted Servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS play is considerably shortened in the performance; but I hope it will not be disagreeable to the reader to see it as it was at first written; there being a great difference betwixt a play in the closet, and upon the stage.

PROLOGUE.

BOLD is the man! who, in this nicer age,
Preſumes to tread the chaſte corrected ſtage.
Now, with gay tinſel arts, we can no more
Conceal the want of nature's ſterling ore.
Our ſpells are vaniſh'd, broke our magic wand,
That us'd to waft you over ſea and land.
Before your light *the fairy people fade,*
The demons fly—The ghoſt itſelf is laid.
In vain of martial ſcenes the loud alarms,
The mighty prompter thundering out to arms,
The play-houſe poſſe clattering from afar,
The cloſe-wedg'd battle, and the din of war.
Now, even the ſenate ſeldom we convene;
The yawning fathers nod behind the ſcene.
Your taſte rejects the glittering falſe ſublime,
To ſigh in metaphor, and die in rhime.
High rant *is tumbled from his gallery throne:*
Deſcription, dreams—nay ſimilies are gone.
What ſhall we then? to pleaſe you how deviſe
Whoſe judgment ſits not in your ears and eyes?
Thrice happy! could we catch great Shakeſpear's *art,*
To trace the deep receſſes of the heart;
His ſimple plain ſublime, to which is given
To ſtrike the ſoul with darted flame from heaven:
Could we awake ſoft Otway's *tender woe,*
The pomp of verſe and golden lines of Rowe.

We to your hearts apply: let them attend;
Before their ſilent candid bar we bend.
If warm'd, they liſten, 'tis our nobleſt praiſe;
If cold, they wither all the muſe's bays.

Perſons

Perſons repreſented.

TANCRED, Count of *Leece*,	by	Mr. *Garrick.*
MATTEO SIFFREDI, lord high chancellor of *Sicily*,		Mr. *Sheridan.*
Earl OSMOND, lord high conſtable of *Sicily*,		Mr. *Delane.*
RODOLPHO, friend to TANCRED, and captain of the guards,		Mr. *Havard.*
SIGISMUNDA, daughter of SIFFREDI,		Mrs. *Cibber.*
LAURA, ſiſter of RODOLPHO, and friend to SIGISMUNDA,		Miſs *Budgel.*

BARONS, OFFICERS, GUARDS, *&c.*

SCENE,

The City of *Palermo* in *Sicily*.

Tancred and *Sigiſmunda.*

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

SIGISMUNDA.

AH fatal day to *Sicily!* The king
Approaches his laſt moments?

LAURA.

So 'tis fear'd.

SIGISMUNDA.

The death of thoſe diſtinguiſh'd by their ſtation,
But by their virtue more, awakes the mind

To

To ſolemn dread, and ſtrikes a ſaddening awe:
Not that we grieve for them, but for ourſelves,
Left to the toil of life—And yet the beſt
Are, by the playful children of this world,
At once forgot, as they had never been.
Laura, 'tis ſaid—the heart is ſometimes charged
With a prophetic ſadneſs: Such, methinks,
Now hangs on mine. The king's approaching death
Suggeſts a thouſand fears. What troubles thence
May throw the ſtate once more into confuſion,
What ſudden changes in my father's houſe
May riſe, and part me from my deareſt *Tancred*,
Alarms my thought.

LAURA.

The fears of love-ſick fancy!
Perverſely buſy to torment it ſelf.
But be aſſur'd, your father's ſteady friendſhip,
Join'd to a certain genius, that commands,
Not kneels to fortune, will ſupport and cheriſh,
Here in the public eye of *Sicily*,
This—I may call him—his adopted ſon,
The noble *Tancred*, form'd to all his virtues.

SIGISMUNDA.

Ah form'd to charm his daughter!—This fair morn
Has tempted far the chace. Is he not yet
Return'd?

LAURA.

No.—When your father to the king,
Who now expiring lies, was call'd in haſte,

He

He ſent each way his meſſengers to find him;
With ſuch a look of ardor and impatience,
As if this near event was to Count *Tancred*
Of more importance than I comprehend.

SIGISMUNDA.

There lies, my *Laura*, o'er my *Tancred*'s birth
A cloud I cannot pierce. With princely accoſt,
Nay, with reſpect, which oft I have obſerv'd,
Stealing at times ſubmiſſive o'er his features,
In *Belmont*'s woods my father rear'd this youth—
Ah woods! where firſt my artleſs boſom learnt
The ſighs of love.—He gives him out the ſon
Of an old friend, a baron of *Apulia*,
Who in the late cruſado bravely fell.
But then 'tis ſtrange; is all his family
As well as father dead? and all their friends,
Except my ſire, the generous good *Siffredi*?
Had he a mother, ſiſter, brother left,——
The laſt remain of kindred; with what pride,
What rapture, might they fly o'er the earth and ſea,
To claim this riſing honour of their blood!
This bright unknown! this all-accompliſh'd youth!
Who charms—too much—the heart of *Sigiſmunda*!
Laura, perhaps your brother knows him better,
The friend and partner of his freeſt hours.
What ſays *Rodolpho*? Does he truly credit
This ſtory of his birth?

LAURA.

He has ſometimes,

Like

Like you, his doubts; yet, when maturely weigh'd,
Believes it true. As for lord *Tancred*'s ſelf,
He never entertain'd the ſlighteſt thought
That verg'd to doubt; but oft laments his ſtate,
By cruel fortune ſo ill-pair'd to yours.

SIGISMUNDA.

Merit like his, the fortune of the mind,
Beggars all wealth—Then to your brother, *Laura*,
He talks of me?

LAURA.

Of nothing elſe. Howe'er
The talk begin, it ends with *Sigiſmunda*.
Their morning, noontide, and their evening walks
Are full of you; and all the woods of *Belmont*
Inamour'd with your name—

SIGISMUNDA.

Away, my friend;
You flatter——yet the dear deluſion charms.

LAURA.

No; *Sigiſmunda*, 'tis the ſtricteſt truth,
Nor half the truth, I tell you. Even with fondneſs
My brother talks for ever of the paſſion,
That fires young *Tancred*'s breaſt. So much it ſtrikes him,
He praiſes love as if he were a lover.
He blames the falſe purſuits of vagrant youth,
Calls them gay folly, a miſtaken ſtruggle
Againſt beſt-judging nature. Heaven, he ſays,
In laviſh bounty form'd the heart for love;

In

In love included all the finer ſeeds
Of honour, virtue, friendſhip, pureſt bliſs——

SIGISMUNDA.

Virtuous *Rodolpho!*

LAURA.

Then his pleaſing theme
He varies to the praiſes of your lover—

SIGISMUNDA.

And what, my *Laura*, ſays he on the ſubject?

LAURA.

He ſays that, tho' he were not nobly born,
Nature has form'd him noble, generous, brave,
Truly magnanimous, and warmly ſcorning
Whatever bears the ſmalleſt taint of baſeneſs:
That every eaſy virtue is his own;
Not learnt by painful labour, but inſpir'd,
Implanted in his ſoul—Chiefly one charm
He in his graceful character obſerves;
That though his paſſions burn with high impatience,
And ſometimes, from a noble heat of nature,
Are ready to fly off; yet the leaſt check
Of ruling reaſon brings them back to temper,
And gentle ſoftneſs.

SIGISMUNDA.

True! O true, *Rodolpho!*
Bleſt be thy kindred worth for loving his!
He is all warmth, all amiable fire,
All quick heroic ardor! temper'd ſoft
With gentleneſs of heart, and manly reaſon!

If virtue were to wear a human form,
To light it with her dignity and flame,
Then ſoftning mix her ſmiles and tender graces;
O ſhe would chuſe the perſon of my *Tancred!*
Go on, my friend, go on, and ever praiſe him;
The ſubject knows no bounds, nor can I tire,
While my breaſt trembles to that ſweeteſt muſic!
The heart of woman taſtes no truer joy,
Is never flatter'd with ſuch dear inchantment——
'Tis more than ſelfiſh vanity—as when
She hears the praiſes of the man ſhe loves——

LAURA.

Madam, your father comes.

SCENE II.

SIFFREDI, SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

SIFFREDI.

[*To an attendant as he enters.*
Lord *Tancred* then
Is found?

ATTENDANT.

My lord, he quickly will be here,
I ſcarce could keep before him, tho' he bid me
Speed on, to ſay he would attend your orders.

SIFFREDI.

'Tis well—retire—You, too, my daughter, leave me.

SIGIS-

SIGISMUNDA.

I go, my father—But how fares the king?

SIFFREDI.

He is no more. Gone to that awful ſtate,
Where kings the crown wear only of their virtues.

SIGISMUNDA.

How bright muſt then be his!—This ſtroke is ſudden.
He was this morning well, when to the chace
Lord *Tancred* went.

SIFFREDI.

'Tis true. But at his years
Death gives ſhort notice—Drooping nature then,
Without a guſt of pain to ſhake it, falls.
His death, my daughter, was that happy period
Which few attain. The duties of his day
Were all diſcharg'd, and gratefully enjoy'd
It's nobleſt bleſſings; calm as evening ſkies,
Was his pure mind, and lighted up with hopes
That open heaven; when, for his laſt long ſleep
Timely prepar'd, a laſſitude of life,
A pleaſing wearineſs of mortal joy,
Fell on his ſoul, and down he ſunk to reſt.
O may my death be ſuch!—He but one wiſh
Left unfulfill'd, which was to ſee count *Tancred*——

SIGISMUNDA.

To ſee count *Tancred!*—Pardon me, my lord——

SIFFREDI.

For what, my daughter?—But, with ſuch emotion,
Why did you ſtart at mention of count *Tancred?*

SIGISMUNDA.

Nothing—I only hop'd the dying king
Might mean to make ſome generous juſt proviſion
For this your worthy charge, this noble orphan.

SIFFREDI.

And he has done it largely—Leave me now—
I want ſome private conference with lord *Tancred*.

SCENE III.

SIFFREDI *alone*.

My doubts are but too true—If theſe old eyes
Can trace the marks of love, a mutual paſſion
Has ſeiz'd, I fear, my daughter and this prince,
My ſovereign now—Should it be ſo? Ah there,
There lurks a brooding tempeſt, that may ſhake
My long concerted ſcheme, to ſettle firm
The public peace and welfare, which the king
Has made the prudent baſis of his will———
Away! unworthy views! you ſhall not tempt me!
Nor intereſt, nor ambition ſhall ſeduce,
My fixt reſolve——periſh the ſelfiſh thought,
Which our own good prefers to that of millions!—
He comes—my king—unconſcious of his fortune.

SCENE IV.

TANCRED, SIFFREDI.

TANCRED.

My lord *Siffredi*, in your looks I read,
Confirm'd, the mournful news that fly abroad
From tongue to tongue—We then, at laſt, have loſt
The good old king?

SIFFREDI.

Yes, we have loſt a father!
The greateſt bleſſing heaven beſtows on mortals,
And ſeldom found amidſt theſe wilds of time.
A good, a worthy king!—Hear me, my *Tancred*,
And I will tell thee, in a few plain words,
How he deſerv'd that beſt, that glorious title.
'Tis nought complex, 'tis clear as truth and virtue.
He lov'd his people, deem'd them all his children;
The good exalted, and depreſs'd the bad.
He ſpurn'd the flattering crew, with ſcorn rejected
Their ſmooth advice that only means themſelves,
Their ſchemes to aggrandize him into baſeneſs;
Nor did he leſs diſdain the ſecret breath,
The whiſper'd tale, that blights a virtuous name.
He ſought alone the good of thoſe for whom
He was entruſted with the ſovereign power:
Well knowing that a people in their rights
And induſtry protected; living ſafe

Beneath the ſacred ſhelter of the laws,
Encourag'd in their genius, arts, and labours,
And happy each as he himſelf deſerves,
Are ne'er ungrateful. With unſparing hand
They will for him provide: their filial love
And confidence are his unfailing treaſure,
And every honeſt man his faithful gûard.

TANCRED.

A general face of grief o'erſpreads the city.
I mark'd the people, as I hither came,
In crouds aſſembled, ſtruck with ſilent ſorrow,
And pouring forth the nobleſt praiſe of tears.
Thoſe, whom remembrance of their former woes,
And long experience of the vain illuſions
Of youthful hope, and into wiſe conſent
And fear of change corrected, wrung their hands,
And often caſting up their eyes to heaven,
Gave ſign of ſad conjecture. Others ſhew'd,
Athwart their grief, or real or affected,
A gleam of expectation, from what chance
And change might bring. A mingled murmur run
Along the ſtreets; and, from the lonely court
Of him who can no more aſſiſt their fortunes,
I ſaw the courtier-fry, with eager haſte,
All hurrying to *Conſtantia*.

SIFFREDI.

Noble youth!
I joy to hear from thee theſe juſt reflexions,
Worthy of riper years—But if they ſeek

Conſtantia,

Conſtantia, truſt me, they miſtake their courſe.

TANCRED.

How! Is ſhe not my lord the late king's ſiſter,
Heir to the crown of *Sicily*? the laſt
Of our fam'd *Norman* line, and now our queen?

SIFFREDI.

Tancred, 'tis true; ſhe is the late king's ſiſter,
The ſole ſurviving offspring of that tyrant
William the bad—ſo for his vices ſtil'd;
Who ſpilt much noble blood, and ſore oppreſs'd
Th' exhauſted land: whence grievous wars aroſe,
And many a dire convulſion ſhook the ſtate.
When he, whoſe death *Sicilia* mourns to-day,
William, who has and well deſerv'd the name
Of *Good*, ſucceeded to his father's throne,
Reliev'd his country's woes—But to return—
She is the late king's ſiſter, born ſome months
After the tyrant's death, but not next heir.

TANCRED.

You much ſurpriſe me—May I then preſume
To aſk who is?

SIFFREDI.

Come nearer, noble *Tancred*,
Son of my care! I muſt, on this occaſion,
Conſult thy generous heart; which, when conducted
By rectitude of mind and honeſt virtues,
Gives better counſel than the hoary head—
Then know, there lives a prince, here in *Palermo*,
The lineal offspring of our famous heroe,

Roger the firſt.

TANCRED.

Great heaven!—How far remov'd
From that our mighty founder?

SIFFREDI.

His great grandſon:
Sprung from his eldeſt ſon, who died untimely,
Before his father.

TANCRED.

Ha! the prince you mean
Is he not *Manfred*'s ſon? The generous, brave,
Unhappy *Manfred!* whom the tyrant *William*,
You juſt now mention'd, not content to ſpoil
Of his paternal crown, threw into fetters,
And infamouſly murder'd.

SIFFREDI.

Yes—the ſame.

TANCRED.

By heavens! I joy to find our *Norman* reign,
The world's ſole light amidſt theſe barbarous ages!
Yet rears its head; and ſhall not, from the lance,
Paſs to the feeble diſtaff—But this prince
Where has he lain conceal'd?

SIFFREDI.

The late good king,
By noble pity mov'd, contriv'd to ſave him
From his dire father's unrelenting rage;
And had him rear'd in private, as became
His birth and hopes, with high and princely nurture.

Till

Till now, too young to rule a troubled ſtate,
By civil broils moſt miſerably torn,
He in his ſafe retreat has lain conceal'd,
His birth and fortune to himſelf unknown;
But when the dying king to me entruſted,
As to the chancellor of the realm, his will,
His ſucceſſor he nam'd him.

TANCRED.

Happy youth!
He then will triumph o'er his father's foes,
O'er haughty *Oſmond*, and the tyrant's daughter.

SIFFREDI.

Ay, that is what I dread—that heat of youth;
There lurks, I fear, perdition to the ſtate;
I dread the horrors of rekindled war.
Tho' dead, the tyrant ſtill is to be fear'd;
His daughter's party ſtill is ſtrong, and numerous:
Her friend, earl *Oſmond*, conſtable of *Sicily*,
Experienc'd, brave, high-born, of mighty intereſt.
Better the prince and princeſs ſhould by marriage
Unite their friends, their intereſt and their claims;
Then will the peace and welfare of the land
On a firm baſis riſe.

TANCRED.

My lord *Siffredi*,
If by myſelf I of this prince may judge,
That ſcheme will ſcarce ſucceed—Your prudent age
In vain will counſel, if the heart forbid it—
But wherefore fear? The right is clearly his;

And, under your direction, with each man
Of worth, and ſtedfaſt loyalty, to back
At once the king's appointment and his birthright,
There is no ground for fear. They have great odds,
Againſt the aſtoniſh'd ſons of violence,
Who fight with awful juſtice on their ſide.
All *Sicily* will rouze, all faithful hearts
Will range themſelves around prince *Manfred*'s ſon.
For me, I here devote me to the ſervice
Of this young prince; I every drop of blood
Will loſe with joy, with tranſport, in his cauſe—
Pardon my warmth—but that, my lord, will never
To this deciſion come.—Then find the prince;
Loſe not a moment to awaken in him
The royal ſoul. Perhaps he now deſponding
Pines in a corner, and laments his fortune;
That in the narrower bounds of private life
He muſt confine his aims, thoſe ſwelling virtues
Which from his noble father he inherits.

SIFFREDI.

Perhaps, regardleſs, in the common bane
Of youth he melts, in vanity and love.
But if the ſeeds of virtue glow within him,
I will awake a higher ſenſe, a love
That graſps the loves and happineſs of millions.

TANCRED.

Why that ſurmiſe? Or ſhould he love, *Siffredi*,
I doubt not, it is nobly, which will raiſe
And animate his virtues—O permit me

To

To plead the cauſe of youth—Their virtue oft,
In pleaſures ſoft inchantment lull'd a while,
Forgets itſelf; it ſleeps and gayly dreams,
Till great occaſion rouſe it: Then all flame,
It walks abroad, with heighten'd ſoul and vigour,
And by the change aſtoniſhes the world.
Even with a kind of ſympathy, I feel
The joy that waits this prince; when all the powers,
Th' expanding heart can wiſh, of doing good;
Whatever ſwells ambition, or exalts
The human ſoul into divine emotions,
All croud at once upon him.

SIFFREDI.

Ah, my *Tancred*,
Nothing ſo eaſy as in ſpeculation,
And at a diſtance ſeen the courſe of honour,
A fair delightful champaign ſtrew'd with flowers.
But when the practice comes; when our fond paſſions,
Pleaſure, and pride, and ſelf-indulgence, throw
Their magic duſt around, the proſpect roughens:
Then dreadful paſſes, craggy mountains riſe,
Cliffs to be ſcal'd, and torrents to be ſtem'd:
Then toil enſues; and perſeverance ſtern;
And endleſs combats with our groſſer ſenſe,
Oft loſt, and oft renew'd; and generous pain
For others felt; and, harder leſſon ſtill!
Our honeſt bliſs for others ſacrific'd;
And all the rugged taſk of virtue quails.
The ſtouteſt heart of common reſolution.

Few get above this turbid ſcene of ſtrife,
Few gain the ſummit, breathe that pureſt air,
That heavenly ether, which untroubled ſees
The ſtorm of vice and paſſion rage below.

TANCRED.

Moſt true, my Lord. But why thus augure ill?
You ſeem to doubt this prince. I know him not.
Yet oh, methinks, my heart could anſwer for him!
The juncture is ſo high, ſo ſtrong the gale
That blows from heaven, as thro' the deadeſt ſoul
Might breathe the godlike energy of virtue.

SIFFREDI.

Hear him, immortal ſhades of his great fathers!—
Forgive me, ſir, this trial of your heart:
Thou! Thou art he!

TANCRED.

Siffredi!

SIFFREDI.

Tancred, thou!
Thou art the man, of all the many thouſands
That toil upon the boſom of this iſle,
By heaven elected to command the reſt,
To rule, protect them, and to make them happy!

TANCRED.

Manfred my father! I the laſt ſupport
Of the fam'd *Norman* line, that awes the world!
I! who this morning wander'd forth an orphan,
Outcaſt of all but thee, my ſecond father!
Thus call'd to glory! to the firſt great lot

Of

Of human kind!—O wonder-working Hand
That, in majeſtic ſilence, ſways at will
The mighty movements of unbounded nature;
O grant me, Heaven! the virtues to ſuſtain
This awful burden of ſo many heroes!
Let me not be exalted into ſhame,
Set up the worthleſs pageant of vain grandeur.
Meantime I thank the juſtice of the king,
Who has my right bequeath'd me. Thee, *Siffredi*,
I thank thee—O I ne'er enough can thank thee!
Yes, thou haſt been—thou art—ſhalt be my father!
Thou ſhalt direct my unexperienc'd years,
Shalt be the ruling head, and I the hand.

SIFFREDI.

It is enough for me—to ſee my ſovereign
Aſſert his virtues, and maintain his honour.

TANCRED.

I think, my lord, you ſaid the king committed
To you his will. I hope it is not clogg'd
With any baſe conditions, any clauſe,
To tyrannize my heart, and to *Conſtantia*
Enſlave my hand devoted to another.
The hint you juſt now gave of that alliance,
You muſt imagine, wakes my fear. But know,
In this alone I will not bear diſpute,
Not even from thee, *Siffredi!*—Let the council
Be ſtrait aſſembled, and the will there open'd:
Thence iſſue ſpeedy orders to convene,
This day ere noon, the ſenate: where thoſe barons,

Who

Who now are in *Palermo*, will attend,
To pay their ready homage to the King,
Their rightful king, who claims his native crown,
And will not be a king by deeds and parchments.

SIFFREDI.

I go, my liege. But once again permit me
To tell you——Now, now, is the trying criſis,
That muſt determine of your future reign.
O with heroic rigour watch your heart!
And to the ſovereign duties of a king,
Th' unequal'd pleaſures of a God on earth,
Submit the common joys, the common paſſions,
Nay, even the virtues of the private man.

TANCRED.

Of that no more. They not oppoſe, but aid,
Invigorate, cheriſh, and reward each other.
The kind all-ruling Wiſdom is no tyrant.

SCENE V.

TANCRED *alone.*

Now, generous *Sigiſmunda*, comes my turn
To ſhew my love was not of thine unworthy,
When fortune bade me bluſh to look to thee.
But what is fortune to the wiſh of love?
A miſerable bankrupt! O 'tis poor,
'Tis ſcanty all, whate'er we can beſtow!
The wealth of kings is wretchedneſs and want!—

Quick

Quick, let me find her! taſte that higheſt joy,
Th' exalted heart can know, the mixt effuſion
Of gratitude and love!—Behold, ſhe comes!

SCENE VI.

TANCRED, SIGISMUNDA.

TANCRED.

My fluttering ſoul was all on wing to find thee,
My love! my *Sigiſmunda!*

SIGISMUNDA.

O my *Tancred!*
Tell me, what means this myſtery and gloom
That low'rs around. Juſt now involv'd in thought
Thy father ſhot athwart me—You, my lord,
Seem ſtrangely mov'd—I fear ſome dark event
From the king's death to trouble our repoſe,
That tender calm we in the woods of *Belmont*
So happily enjoy'd——Explain this hurry,
What means it? Say.

TANCRED.

It means that we are happy!
Beyond our moſt romantic wiſhes happy!

SIGISMUNDA.

You but perplex me more.

TANCRED.

TANCRED.

It means, my fairest!
That thou art queen of *Sicily*; and I
The happiest of mankind! than monarch more!
Because with thee I can adorn my throne.
Manfred, who fell by tyrant *William*'s rage,
Fam'd *Roger*'s lineal iſſue, was my father.

[*Pauſing.*

You droop, my love; dejected on a ſudden;
You ſeem to mourn my fortune—The ſoft tear
Springs in thy eye—O let me kiſs it off,——
Why this, my *Sigiſmunda*?

SIGISMUNDA.

O Royal *Tancred*,
None at your glorious fortune can like me
Rejoice;—yet me alone, of all *Sicilians*,
It makes unhappy.

TANCRED.

I ſhould hate it then!
Should throw, with ſcorn, the ſplendid ruin from me!—
No, *Sigiſmunda*, 'tis my hope with thee
To ſhare it, whence it draws its richeſt value.

SIGISMUNDA.

You are my ſovereign—I at humble diſtance——

TANCRED.

Thou art my queen! the ſovereign of my ſoul!
You never reign'd with ſuch triumphant luſtre,
Such winning charms as now; yet, thou art ſtill
The dear, the tender, generous *Sigiſmunda!*

Who,

Who, with a heart exalted far above
Thoſe ſelfiſh views that charm the common breaſt,
Stoop'd from the height of life and counted beauty,
Then, then, to love me, when I ſeem'd of fortune
The hopeleſs outcaſt, when I had no friend,
None to protect and own me but thy father.
And would'ſt thou claim all goodneſs to thyſelf?
Can'ſt thou thy *Tancred* deem ſo dully form'd,
Of ſuch groſs clay, juſt as I reach the point—
A point my wildeſt hopes could never image—
In that great moment, full of every virtue,
That I ſhould than ſo mean a traitor prove
To the beſt bliſs and honour of mankind,
So much diſgrace the human heart, as then,
For the dead form of flattery and pomp,
The faithleſs joys of courts, to quit kind truth,
The cordial ſweets of friendſhip and of love,
The life of life! my all, my *Sigiſmunda!*
I could upbraid thy fears, call them unkind,
Cruel, unjuſt, an outrage to my heart,
Did they not ſpring from love.

SIGISMUNDA.

Think not, my lord,
That to ſuch vulgar doubts I can deſcend.
Your heart, I know, diſdains the little thought
Of changing with the vain external change
Of circumſtance and fortune. Rather thence
It would, with riſing ardor, greatly feel
A noble pride to ſhew itſelf the ſame.

But,

But, ah! the hearts of kings are not their own.
There is a haughty duty that ſubjects them
To chains of ſtate, to wed the public welfare,
And not indulge the tender private virtues.
Some high-deſcended princeſs, who will bring
New power and intereſt to your throne demands
Your royal hand—perhaps *Conſtantia*—

TANCRED.

She!
O name her not! Were I this moment free,
And diſengag'd as he who never felt
The powerful eye of beauty, never ſigh'd
For matchleſs worth like thine, I ſhould abhor
All thoughts of that alliance. Her fell father
Moſt baſely murder'd mine; and ſhe, his daughter,
Supported by his barbarous party ſtill,
His pride inherits, his imperious ſpirit,
And inſolent pretenſions to my throne.
And canſt thou deem me then ſo poorly tame,
So cool a traitor to my father's blood,
As from the prudent cowardice of ſtate
E'er to ſubmit to ſuch a baſe propoſal?
Deteſted thought! O doubly, doubly hateful!
From the two ſtrongeſt paſſions; from averſion
To this *Conſtantia*—and from love to thee.
Cuſtom, 'tis true, a venerable tyrant,
O'er ſervile man extends her blind dominion:
The pride of kings enſlaves them; their ambition,
Or intereſt, lords it o'er the better paſſions.

But

But vain their talk, maſk'd under ſpecious words
Of ſtation, duty, and of public good:
They whom juſt heaven has to a throne exalted,
To guard the rights and liberties of others,
What duty binds them to betray their own?
For me, my free-born heart ſhall bear no dictates,
But thoſe of truth and honour; wear no chains,
But the dear chains of love and *Sigiſmunda!*
Or if indeed my choice muſt be directed
By views of public good, whom ſhall I chuſe
So fit to grace, to dignify a crown,
And beam ſweet mercy on a happy people,
As thee, my love? whom place upon my throne
But thee, deſcended from the good *Siffredi?*
'Tis fit that heart be thine, which drew from him
Whate'er can make it worthy thy acceptance.

SIGISMUNDA.

Ceaſe, ceaſe, to raiſe my hopes above my duty.
Charm me no more, my *Tancred!*—O that we
In thoſe bleſt woods, where firſt you won my ſoul,
Had paſs'd our gentle days; far from the toil
And pomp of courts! Such is the wiſh of love;
Of love, that, with delightful weakneſs, knows
No bliſs and no ambition but itſelf.
But, in the world's full light, thoſe charming dreams,
Thoſe fond illuſions vaniſh. Awful duties,
The tyranny of men, even your own heart,
Where lurks a ſenſe your paſſion ſtifles now,
And proud imperious honour call you from me.

'Tis

'Tis all in vain—You cannot huſh a voice
That murmurs here—I muſt not be perſuaded!

TANCRED, *kneeling*,

Hear me, thou ſoul of all my hopes and wiſhes!
And witneſs, heaven! prime ſource of love and joy!
Not a whole warring world combin'd againſt me;
Its pride, its ſplendor, its impoſing forms,
Nor intereſt, nor ambition, nor the face
Of ſolemn ſtate, not even thy father's wiſdom,
Shall ever ſhake my faith to *Sigiſmunda*.

[*Trumpets and acclamations heard.*

But, hark! the public voice to duties call me,
With which unweary'd zeal I will diſcharge;
And thou, yes thou, ſhalt be my bright reward—
Yet—ere I go—to huſh thy lovely fears,
Thy delicate objections——— [*writes his name.*
Take this blank,
Sign'd with my name, and give it to thy father:
Tell him 'tis my command, it be fill'd up
With a moſt ſtrict and ſolemn marriage-contract.
How dear each tye! how charming to my ſoul!
That more unites me to my *Sigiſmunda*.
For thee and for my people's good to live,
I all the bliſs which ſovereign power can give.

End of the First Act.

ACT II. SCENE I.

SIFFREDI *alone.*

SO far 'tis well—The late king's will proceeds
Upon the plan I counsel'd; that prince *Tancred*
Shall make *Constantia* partner of his throne.
O great, O wish'd event! whence the dire seeds
Of dark intestine broils, of civil war,
And all its dreadful miseries and crimes,
Shall be for ever rooted from the land.
May these dim eyes, long blasted by the rage
Of cruel faction and my country's woes,
Tir'd with the toils and vanities of life,
Behold this period, then be clos'd in peace!
But how this mighty obstacle surmount,
Which love has thrown betwixt? Love that disturbs
The schemes of wisdom still; that wing'd with passion,
Blind and impetuous in its fond pursuits,
Leaves the grey-headed reason far behind.
Alas! how frail the state of human bliss!
When even our honest passions oft destroy it.
I was to blame, in solitude and shades,

Infectious

Infectious ſcenes! to truſt their youthful hearts.
Would I had mark'd the riſing flame! that now
Burns out with dangerous force—My daughter owns
Her paſſion for the king; ſhe trembling own'd it,
With prayers and tears and tender ſupplications,
That almoſt ſhook my firmneſs—And this blank,
Which his raſh fondneſs gave her, ſhews how much,
To what a wild extravagance he loves—
I ſee no means—it foils my deepeſt thought—
How to controul this madneſs of the king,
That wears the face of virtue, and will thence
Diſdain reſtraint, will from his generous heart
Borrow new rage, even ſpeciouſly oppoſe
To reaſon, reaſon—But it muſt be done.
My own advice, of which I more and more
Approve, the ſtrict conditions of the will,
Highly demand his marriage with *Conſtantia*;
Or elſe her party has a fair pretence,—
And all, at once, is horror and confuſion—
How iſſue from this maze?—The crouding barons
Here ſummon'd to the palace, meet already,
To pay their homage, and confirm the will.
On a few moments hang the public fate,
On a few haſty moments—Ha! there ſhone
A gleam of hope—Yes—with this very paper
I yet will ſave him—Neceſſary means
For good and noble ends can ne'er be wrong.
In that reſiſtleſs, that peculiar caſe,
Deceit is truth and virtue—But how hold

This

This lion in the toil?—O I will form it
Of ſuch a fatal thread, twiſt it ſo ſtrong
With all the ties of honour and of duty,
That his moſt deſperate fury ſhall not break
The honeſt ſnare—Here is the royal hand—
I will beneath it write a perfect, full,
And abſolute agreement to the will;
Which read before the nobles of the realm
Aſſembled, in the ſacred face of *Sicily*,
Conſtantia preſent, every heart and eye
Fix'd on their monarch, every tongue applauding,
He muſt ſubmit, his dream of love muſt vaniſh—
It ſhall be done!——To me, I know, 'tis ruin;
But ſafety to the public, to the king.
I will not reaſon more, I will not liſten
Even to the voice of honour—No—'tis fix'd!
I here devote me for my prince and country;
Let them be ſafe, and let me nobly periſh!
Behold earl *Oſmond* comes; without whoſe aid
My ſchemes are all in vain.

SCENE

SCENE II.

OSMOND, SIFFREDI.

OSMOND.

My lord *Siffredi*,
I from the council haſten'd to *Conſtantia*,
And have accompliſh'd what we there propos'd.
The princeſs to the will ſubmits her claims.
She with her preſence means to grace the ſenate,
And of your royal charge young *Tancred*'s hand
Accept. At firſt indeed, it ſhock'd her hopes
Of reigning ſole, this new ſurpriſing ſcene
Of *Manfred*'s ſon, appointed by the king
With her joint-heir—But I ſo fully ſhew'd
The juſtice of the caſe, the public good
And ſure eſtabliſh'd peace which thence would riſe,
Joined to the ſtrong neceſſity that urg'd her,
If on *Sicilia*'s throne ſhe meant to ſit,
As to the wiſe diſpoſal of the will
Her high ambition tam'd. Methought, beſides,
I could diſcern that not from prudence merely
She to this choice ſubmitted.

SIFFREDI.

Noble *Oſmond*,
You have in this done to the public great
And ſignal ſervice. Yes, I muſt avow it;
This frank and ready inſtance of your zeal,

In

In such a trying criſis of the ſtate,
When intereſt and ambition might have warp'd
Your views; I own, this truly generous virtue
Upbraids the raſhneſs of my former judgment.

OSMOND.

Giffredi, no.—To you belongs the praiſe;
The glorious work is yours. Had I not ſeiz'd,
Improv'd the wiſh'd occaſion to root out
Diviſion from the land, and ſave my country,
I had been baſe, been infamous for ever.
'Tis you, my lord, to whom the many thouſands,
That by the barbarous ſword of civil war
Had fallen inglorious, owe their lives; to you
The ſons of this fair iſle, from her firſt peers
Down to the ſwain who till her golden plains,
Owe their ſafe homes, their ſoft domeſtic hours,
And thro' late time poſterity ſhall bleſs you,
You who adviſ'd this will—I bluſh to think,
I have ſo long oppos'd the beſt good man
In Sicily—With what impartial care
Ought we to watch o'er prejudice and paſſion,
Nor truſt too much the jaundic'd eye of party!
Henceforth its vain deluſions I renounce,
Its hot determinations, that confine
All merit and all virtue to itſelf.
To yours I join my hand; with you will own
No intereſt and no party but my country.
Nor is your friendſhip only my ambition;
There is a dearer name, the name of father,

By which I ſhould rejoice to call *Siffredi*.
Your daughter's hand would to the public weal
Unite my private happineſs,

SIFFREDI.

My lord,
You have my glad conſent. To be allied
To your diſtinguiſh'd family, and merit,
I ſhall eſteem an honour. From my ſoul
I here embrace earl *Oſmond* as my friend,
And ſon.

OSMOND.

You make him happy. This aſſent,
So frank and warm, to what I long have wiſh'd,
Engages all my gratitude; at once,
In the firſt bloſſom, it matures our friendſhip.
I from this moment vow myſelf thy friend,
And zealous ſervant of *Siffredi*'s houſe.

Enter an officer belonging to the court.

OFFICER *to* SIFFREDI.

The king, my lord, demands your ſpeedy preſence.

SIFFREDI.

I will attend him ſtrait—Farewell, my lord:
The ſenate meets; there, a few moments hence,
I will rejoin you.

OSMOND.

There, my noble lord,
We will compleat this ſalutary work,
Will there begin a new auſpicious era.

SCENE

SCENE III.

OSMOND *alone*.

Siffredi gives his daughter to my wiſhes—
But does ſhe give herſelf? Gay, young, and flatter'd,
Perhaps engag'd, will ſhe her youthful heart
Yield to my harſher, uncomplying years?
I am not form'd, by flattery and praiſe,
By ſighs and tears, and all the whining trade
Of love, to feed a fair one's vanity;
To charm at once and ſpoil her. Theſe ſoft arts
Nor ſuit my years nor temper; theſe be left
To boys and doating age. A prudent father,
By nature charg'd to guide and rule her choice,
Reſigns his daughter to a huſband's power,
Who with ſuperior dignity, with reaſon,
And manly tenderneſs, will ever love her;
Not firſt a kneeling ſlave, and then a tyrant.

SCENE IV.

OSMOND, BARONS.

OSMOND.

My lords, I greet you well. This wondrous day
Unites us all in amity and friendſhip.
We meet to-day with open hearts and looks,

Not gloom'd by party, ſcouling on each other,
But all the children of one happy iſle,
The ſocial ſons of liberty. No pride,
No paſſion now, no thwarting views divide us:
Prince *Manfred*'s line, at laſt, to *William*'s join'd,
Combines us in one family of brothers.
This to the late good king's well-order'd will,
And wiſe *Siffredi*'s generous care we owe.
I truly give you joy. Firſt of you all,
I here renounce thoſe errors and diviſions
That have ſo long diſturb'd our peace, and ſeem'd,
Fermenting ſtill, to threaten new commotions—
By time inſtructed let us not diſdain
To quit miſtakes. We all, my lords, have err'd.
Men may, I find, be honeſt, tho' they differ.

1ſt BARON.

Who follows not, my lord, the fair example
You ſet us all, whate'er be his pretence,
Loves not with ſingle and unbiaſs'd heart
His country as he ought.

2d BARON.

O beauteous peace!
Sweet union of a ſtate! What elſe, but thou,
Gives ſafety, ſtrength, and glory to a people!
I bow, lord conſtable, beneath the ſnow
Of many years; yet in my breaſt revives
A youthful flame. Methinks, I ſee again
Thoſe gentle days renew'd, that bleſs'd our iſle,
Ere by this waſteful fury of diviſion,

Worſe

Worſe than our *Etna*'s moſt deſtructive fires,
It deſolated ſunk. I ſee our plains
Unbounded waving with the gifts of harveſt;
Our ſeas with commerce throng'd, our buſy ports
With chearful toil. Our *Enna* blooms afreſh;
Afreſh the ſweets of thymy *Hybla* flow.
Our nymphs and ſhepherds, ſporting in each vale,
Inſpire new ſong, and wake the paſtoral reed—
The tongue of age is fond—Come, come, my ſons;
I long to ſee this prince, of whom the world
Speaks largely well—His father was my friend,
The brave unhappy *Manfred*—Come, my lords;
We tarry here too long.

SCENE V.

Two OFFICERS, *keeping off the croud.*

One of the croud.

Shew us our king,
The valiant *Manfred*'s ſon, who lov'd the people—
We muſt, we will behold him—Give us way.

1ſt OFFICER.

Pray, gentlemen, give back—it muſt not be—
Give back, I pray—on ſuch a glad occaſion
I would not ill intreat the loweſt of you.

2d MAN *of the croud.*

Nay, give us but a glimpſe of our young king.

We more than any baron of them all
Will pay him true allegiance.

2d OFFICER.

Friends—indeed—
You cannot paſs this way—We have ſtrict orders,
To keep for him himſelf, and for the barons,
All theſe apartments clear—Go to the gate
That fronts the ſea—You there will find admiſſion.

ALL.

Long live king *Tancred*! *Manfred*'s ſon—Huzza!

[*Croud goes off.*

1ſt OFFICER.

I do not marvel at their rage of joy:
He is a brave and amiable prince.
When in my lord *Siffredi*'s houſe I liv'd,
Ere by his favour I obtain'd this office,
I there remember well the young Count *Tancred*.
To ſee him and to love him were the ſame.
He was ſo noble in his ways, yet ſtill
So affable and mild—Well, well, old *Sicily*,
Yet happy days await thee!

2d OFFICER.

Grant it, heaven!
We have ſeen ſad and troublous times enough.
He is, they ſay, to wed the late king's ſiſter,
Conſtantia.

1ſt OFFICER.

Friend, of that I greatly doubt.
Or I miſtake, or lord *Siffredi*'s daughter

The

The gentle *Sigiſmunda* has his heart.
If one may judge by kindly cordial looks,
And fond aſſiduous care to pleaſe each other,
Moſt certainly they love——O be they bleſt,
As they deſerve! It were great pity aught
Should part a matchleſs pair: the glory he,
And ſhe the blooming grace of *Sicily!*

2d OFFICER.

My lord *Rodolpho* comes.

SCENE VI.

RODOLPHO, *from the ſenate.*

RODOLPHO.

My honeſt friends,
You may retire. [*Officers go out.*
A ſtorm is in the wind.
This Will perplexes all. No, *Tancred* never
Can ſtoop to theſe conditions, which at once
Attack his rights, his honour, and his love.
Thoſe wiſe old men, thoſe plotting grave ſtate pedants,
Forget the courſe of youth: their crooked prudence,
To baſeneſs verging ſtill, forgets to take
Into their fine-ſpun ſchemes the generous heart,
That thro' the cobweb ſyſtem burſting lays
Their labours waſte——So will this buſineſs prove,
Or I miſtake the king——back from the pomp

He ſeem'd at firſt to ſhrink, and round his brow
I mark'd a gathering cloud, when by his ſide,
As if deſign'd to ſhare the public homage,
He ſaw the tyrant's daughter. But conſeſs'd,
At leaſt to me, the doubling tempeſt frown'd,
And ſhook his ſwelling boſom, when he heard
Th' unjuſt, the baſe conditions of the will.
Uncertain, toſt in cruel agitation,
He oft, methought, addreſs'd himſelf to ſpeak
And interrupt *Siffredi*; who appear'd,
With conſcious haſte, to dread that interruption,
And hurry'd on.—But hark! I hear a noiſe,
As if th' aſſembly roſe!—Ha! *Sigiſmunda*,
Oppreſs'd with grief and wrapt in penſive ſorrow,
Paſſes along——

Sigiſmunda *and attendants paſs thro' the hall.* Laura *advances.*

SCENE VII.

RODOLPHO, LAURA.

LAURA.

Your high-prais'd friend, the king,
Is falſe, moſt vilely falſe! The meaneſt ſlave
Had ſhown a nobler heart; not groſsly thus,
By the firſt bait ambition ſpread, been gull'd.
He *Manfred's* ſon! away! it cannot be!

The

The ſon of that brave prince could ne'er betray
Thoſe rights ſo long uſurp'd from his great fathers,
Which he, this day, by ſuch amazing fortune,
Had juſt regain'd; he ne'er could ſacrifice
All faith, all honour, gratitude and love,
Even juſt reſentment of his father's fate,
And pride itſelf; whate'er exalts a man
Above the groveling ſons of peaſant-mud,
All in a moment—And for what? why truly,
For kind permiſſion, gracious leave, to ſit
On his own throne with tyrant *William*'s daughter!

RODOLPHO.

I ſtand amaz'd—You ſurely wrong him, *Laura*.
There muſt be ſome miſtake.

LAURA.

There can be none!
Siffredi read his full and free conſent
Before th' applauding ſenate. 'True indeed,
A ſmall remain of ſhame, a timorous weakneſs,
Even daſtardly in falſehood made him bluſh
To act this ſcene in *Sigiſmunda*'s eye,
Who ſunk beneath his perfidy and baſeneſs.
Hence, till to-morrow he adjourn'd the ſenate—
To-morrow fix'd with infamy to crown him!
Then, leading off his gay triumphant princeſs
He left the poor unhappy *Sigiſmunda*,
To bend her trembling ſteps to that ſad home
His faithleſs vows will render hateful to her——
He comes—Farewell—I cannot bear his preſence!

SCENE VIII.

TANCRED, SIFFREDI, RODOLPHO.

TANCRED *entering to* SIFFREDI.

Avoid me, hoary traitor!—Go, *Rodolpho*,
Give orders that all paſſages this way
Be ſhut—Defend me from a hateful world,
The bane of peace and honour—then return—
What! doſt thou haunt me ſtill? O monſtrous inſult!
Unparallel'd indignity! Juſt heaven!
Was ever king, was ever man ſo treated?
So trampled into baſeneſs!

SIFFREDI.

Here, my liege,
Here ſtrike! I nor deſerve, nor aſk for mercy.

TANCRED.

Diſtraction!—O my ſoul—Hold, reaſon, hold
Thy giddy ſeat—O this inhuman outrage
Unhinges thought!

SIFFREDI.

Exterminate thy ſervant!

TANCRED.

All, all but this I could have borne—but this!
This daring inſolence beyond example!
This murderous ſtroke that ſtabs my peace for ever!
That wounds me there—there! where the human heart
Moſt exquiſitely feels—

SIFFREDI.

SIFFREDI.

O bear it not,
My royal lord! appeaſe on me your vengeance!

TANCRED.

Did ever tyrant image aught ſo cruel?
The loweſt ſlave that crawls upon the earth,
Robb'd of each comfort heaven beſtows on mortals;
On the bare ground, has ſtill his virtue left,
The ſacred treaſures of an honeſt heart,
Which thou haſt dar'd, with raſh audacious hand,
And impious fraud, in me to violate——

SIFFREDI.

Behold, my liege, that raſh audacious hand,
Which not repents its crime—O glorious! happy!
If by my ruin I can ſave your honour.

TANCRED.

Such honour I renounce! with ſovereign ſcorn
Greatly deteſt it, and its mean adviſer!
Haſt thou not dar'd beneath my name to ſhelter—
My name for other purpoſes deſign'd,
Given from the fondneſs of a faithful heart,
With the beſt love o'erflowing—haſt thou not
Beneath thy ſovereign's name baſely preſum'd
To ſhield a lye? a lye! in publick utter'd,
To all deluded *Sicily*? But know,
This poor contrivance is as weak as baſe.
In ſuch a wretched toil none can be held
But fools and cowards—O thy flimſy arts,
Touch'd by my juſt, my burning indignation,

Shall burſt like threads in flame!—Thy doating prudence
But more ſecures the purpoſe it would ſhake.
Had my reſolves been wavering and doubtful,
This would confirm them, make them fix'd as fate;
This adds the only motive that was wanting
To urge them on thro' war and deſolation—
What! marry her! *Conſtantia!* Her! the daughter
Of the fell tyrant who deſtroy'd my father!
The very thought is madneſs! Ere thou ſeeſt
The torch of *Hymen* light theſe hated nuptials,
Thou ſhalt behold *Sicilia* wrapt in flames,
Her cities raz'd, her valleys drench'd with ſlaughter—
Love ſet aſide—my pride aſſumes the quarrel.
My honour now is up; in ſpite of thee,
A world combin'd againſt me, I will give
This ſcatter'd Will in fragments to the winds,
Aſſert my rights, the freedom of my heart,
Cruſh all who dare oppoſe me to the duſt,
And heap perdition on thee!

SIFFREDI.

Sir, 'tis juſt.
Exhauſt on me your rage; I claim it all.
But for theſe public threats thy paſſion utters,
'Tis what thou canſt not do!

TANCRED.

I cannot! ha!
Driven to the dreadful brink of ſuch diſhonour,
Enough to make the tameſt coward brave,

And

And into fierceneſs rouze the mildeſt nature,
What ſhall arreſt my vengeance? who?

SIFFREDI.

Thy ſelf!

TANCRED.

Away! dare not to juſtify thy crime!
That, that alone can aggravate its horror,
Add inſolence to inſolence—perhaps
May make my rage forget——

SIFFREDI.

O let it burſt
On this grey head devoted to thy ſervice!
But when the ſtorm has vented all its fury,
Thou then muſt hear—nay more, I know, thou wilt—
Wilt hear the calm, yet ſtronger voice of reaſon.
Thou muſt reflect, that a whole people's ſafety,
The weal of truſted millions ſhould bear down,
Thy ſelf the judge, thy fondeſt partial pleaſure.
Thou muſt reflect that there are other duties,
A nobler pride, a more exalted honour,
Superior pleaſures far, that will oblige,
Compel thee, to abide by this my deed,
Unwarranted perhaps in common juſtice,
But which neceſſity, even virtue's tyrant,
With awful voice commanded—Yes, thou muſt,
In calmer hours, diveſt thee of thy love,
Theſe common paſſions of the vulgar breaſt,
This boiling heat of youth, and be a king!

The

The lover of thy people!

TANCRED.

Truths ill-employ'd!
Abus'd to colour guilt! a king! a king!
Yes, I will be a king, but not a ſlave!
In this will be a king! in this my people
Shall learn to judge how I will guard their rights,
When they behold me vindicate my own.
But have I, ſay, been treated like a king?——
Heavens! could I ſtoop to ſuch outrageous uſage,
I were a mean a ſhameleſs wretch, unworthy
To weild a ſceptre in a land of ſlaves,
A ſoil abhorr'd of virtue, ſhould belye
My father's blood, bely thoſe very maxims,
At other times, you taught my youth—*Siffredi!*

[*In a ſoftened tone of voice.*

SIFFREDI.

Behold, my prince, behold thy poor old ſervant,
Whoſe darling care, theſe twenty years, has been
To nurſe thee up to virtue; who for thee,
Thy glory and thy weal, renounces all,
All intereſt or ambition can pour forth;
What many a ſelfiſh father would purſue
Thro' treachery and crimes; behold him here,
Bent on his feeble knees, to beg, conjure thee,
With tears to beg thee, to controul thy paſſion,
And ſave thyſelf, thy honour, and thy people!
Kneeling with me behold the many thouſands

To

To thy protection truſted: Fathers, mothers,
The ſacred front of venerable age,
The tender virgin and the helpleſs infant;
The miniſters of heaven, thoſe, who maintain,
Around thy throne, the majeſty of rule;
And thoſe, whoſe labour, ſcorch'd by winds and ſun,
Feeds the rejoicing public: ſee them all,
Here at thy feet, conjuring thee to ſave them,
From miſery and war, from crimes and rapine!
Can there be aught, kind heaven! in ſelf-indulgence
To weigh down theſe? This aggregate of love,
With which compar'd the deareſt private paſſion
Is but the wafted duſt upon the balance?
Turn not away—Oh is there not ſome part,
In thy great heart, ſo ſenſible to kindneſs,
And generous warmth, ſome nobler part, to feel
The prayers and tears of theſe, the mingled voice
Of heaven and earth!

TANCRED.

There is! and thou haſt touch'd it.
Riſe, riſe, *Siffredi*—Oh! thou haſt undone me,
Unkind old man! O ill-entreated *Tancred!*
Which way ſoe'er I turn, diſhonour rears
Her hideous front—and miſery and ruin!
Was it for this you took ſuch care to form me?
For this imbued me with the quickeſt ſenſe
Of ſhame; theſe finer feelings, that ne'er vex
The common maſs of mortals, dully happy

In

In bleſt inſenſibility? O rather
You ſhould have ſear'd my heart; taught me that power
And ſplendid intereſt lord it ſtill o'er virtue;
That, gilded by proſperity and pride,
There is no ſhame, no meanneſs: temper'd thus,
I had been fit to rule a venal world.
Alas! what meant thy wantonneſs of prudence?
Why have you rais'd this miſerable conflict
Betwixt the duties of the king and man?
Set virtue againſt virtue?—Ah, *Siffredi!*
'Tis thy ſuperfluous, thy unfeeling wiſdom,
That has involv'd me in a maze of error,
Almoſt beyond retreat—But hold, my ſoul,
Thy ſteady purpoſe—Toſt by various paſſions,
To this eternal anchor keep—There is,
Can be no public without private virtue—
Then mark me well, obſerve what I command;
It is the ſole expedient now remaining—
To-morrow, when the ſenate meets again,
Unfold the whole, unravel the deceit;
Nor that alone, try to repair its miſchief;
There all thy power, thy eloquence and intereſt
Exert, to reinſtate me in my rights,
And from thy own dark ſnares to diſembroil me—
Start not, my lord—This muſt and ſhall be done!
Or here, our friendſhip ends—Howe'er diſguis'd,
Whatever thy pretence, thou art a traytor.

SIFFREDI.

SIFFREDI.

I ſhould indeed deſerve the name of traitor,
And even a traitor's fate, had I ſo ſlightly,
From principles ſo weak, done what I did,
As e'er to diſavow it——

TANCRED.

Ha!

SIFFREDI.

My liege,
Expect not this—Tho' practis'd long in courts,
I have not ſo far learn'd their ſubtle trade,
To veer obedient with each guſt of paſſion.
I honour thee, I venerate thy orders,
But honour more my duty. Nought on earth
Shall ever ſhake me from that ſolid rock,
Nor ſmiles nor frowns.—

TANCRED.

You will not then?

SIFFREDI.

I cannot!

TANCRED.

Away! begone!—O my *Rodolpho*, come,
And ſave me from this traitor!—Hence, I ſay,
Avoid my preſence ſtrait! and, know, old man,
Thou my worſt foe beneath the maſk of friendſhip,
Who, not content to trample in the duſt
My deareſt rights, doſt with cool inſolence
Perſiſt, and call it duty; hadſt thou not

A daughter that protects thee, thou ſhouldſt feel
The vengeance thou deſerv'ſt—No reply!
Away!

SCENE IX.

TANCRED, RODOLPHO.

RODOLPHO.

What can incenſe my prince ſo highly
Againſt his friend *Siffredi?*

TANCRED.

Friend! *Rodolpho?*
When I have told thee what this friend has done,
How play'd me like a boy, a baſe-born wretch,
Who had nor heart nor ſpirit! thou wilt ſtand
Amaz'd and wonder at my ſtupid patience.

RODOLPHO.

I heard, with mixt aſtoniſhment and grief,
The king's unjuſt diſhonourable will,
Void in itſelf—I ſaw you ſtung with rage,
And writhing in the ſnare; juſt as I went,
At your command, to wait you here—but that
Was the king's deed, not his.

TANCRED.

O he adviſ'd it!
Theſe many years he has in ſecret hatch'd
This black contrivance, glories in the ſcheme,

And proudly plumes him with his traiterous virtue.
But that was nought, *Rodolpho*, nothing, nothing!
O that was gentle, blameleſs to what follow'd!
I had, my friend, to *Sigiſmunda* given,
To huſh her fears, in the full guſh of fondneſs,
A blank ſign'd by my hand—and he—O heavens!
Was ever ſuch a wild attempt!—he wrote
Beneath my name an abſolute compliance
To this deteſted Will; nay, dar'd to read it
Before my ſelf, on my inſulted throne
His idle pageant plac'd—O words are weak
To paint the pangs, the rage, the indignation,
That whirl'd from thought to thought my ſoul in tempeſt,
Now on the point to burſt, and now by ſhame
Repreſs'd—But in the face of *Sicily*,
All mad with acclamation, what, *Rodolpho*,
What could I do? The ſole relief that roſe
To my diſtracted mind, was to adjourn
Th' aſſembly till to-morrow—But to-morrow
What can be done?—O it avails not what!
I care not what is done—My only care
Is how to clear my faith to *Sigiſmunda*.
She thinks me falſe! She caſt a look that kill'd me!
O I am baſe in *Sigiſmunda*'s eye!
The loweſt of mankind, the moſt perfidious!

RODOLPHO.

This was a ſtrain of inſolence indeed,
A daring outrage of ſo ſtrange a nature,
As ſtuns me quite———

TANCRED.

TANCRED.

Curs'd be my timid prudence!
That dash'd not back, that moment, in his face,
The bold presumptuous lye—and curs'd this hand!
That from a start of poor dissimulation,
Led off my *Sigismunda*'s hated rival.
Ah then! what, poison'd by the false appearance,
What, *Sigismunda*, were thy thoughts of me!
How, in the silent bitterness of soul,
How didst thou scorn me! hate mankind, thyself,
For trusting to the vows of faithless *Tancred!*
For such I seem'd—I was!—The thought distracts me
I should have cast a flattering world aside,
Rush'd from my throne, before them all avow'd her,
The choice, the glory of my free-born heart,
And spurn'd the shameful fetters thrown upon it—
Instead of that—confusion!——what I did
Has clinch'd the chain, confirm'd *Siffredi*'s crime,
And fix'd me down to infamy!

RODOLPHO.

My lord,
Blame not the conduct, which your situation
Tore from your tortur'd heart—What could you do?
Had you so circumstanc'd, in open senate,
Before th' astonish'd public, with no friends
Prepar'd, no party form'd, affronted thus
The haughty princess and her powerful faction,
Supported by this Will, the sudden stroke,
Abrupt and premature, might have recoil'd

Upon

Upon your ſelf, even your own friends revolted,
And turned at once the public ſcale againſt you.
Beſides, conſider, had you then detected
In its freſh guilt this action of *Siffredi*,
You muſt with ſignal vengeance have chaſtis'd
The treaſonable deed—Nothing ſo mean
As weak inſulted power that dares not puniſh.
And how would that have ſuited with your love?
His daughter preſent too? Truſt me, your conduct,
Howe'er abhorrent to a heart like yours,
Was fortunate and wiſe—Not that I mean
T'er to adviſe ſubmiſſion——

TANCRED.

Heavens! Submiſſion!
Could I deſcend to bear it, even in thought,
Deſpiſe me, you, the world, and *Sigiſmunda!*
Submiſſion! No!—To-morrow's glorious light
Shall flaſh diſcovery on this ſcene of baſeneſs.
Whatever be the riſque, by heavens! to-morrow,
I will o'erturn the dirty lye-built ſchemes
Of theſe old men, and ſhew my faithful ſenate,
That *Manfred*'s ſon knows to aſſert and wear,
With undiminiſh'd dignity, that crown
This unexpected day has plac'd upon him.
But this, my friend, theſe ſtormy guſts of pride
Are foreign to my love—Till *Sigiſmunda*
Be diſabus'd, my breaſt is tumult all,
And can obey no ſettled courſe of reaſon.
I ſee her ſtill, I feel her powerful image,

That

That look, where with reproach complaint was mix'd
Big with ſoft woe and gentle indignation,
Which ſeem'd at once to pity and to ſcorn me—
O let me find her! I too long have left
My *Sigiſmunda* to converſe with tears,
A prey to thoughts that picture me a villain.
But ah! how clogg'd with this accurſed ſtate,
A tedious world, ſhall I now find acceſs?
Her father too—Ten thouſand horrors croud
Into the wild fantaſtic eye of love—
Who knows what he may do? Come then, my friend,
And by thy ſiſter's hand O let me ſteal
A letter to her boſom—I no longer
Can bear her abſence, by the juſt contempt
She now muſt brand me with, inflam'd to madneſs.
Fly, my *Rodolpho*, fly! engage thy ſiſter
To aid my letter, and this very evening
Secure an interview—I would not bear
This rack another day, not for my kingdom!
Till then deep-plung'd in ſolitude and ſhades,
I will not ſee the hated face of man.

Thought drives on thought, on paſſions paſſions roll
Her ſmiles alone can calm my raging ſoul.

End of the Second Act.

A C

ACT III. SCENE I.

SIGISMUNDA *alone ſitting in a diſconſolate poſture.*

AH tyrant prince! ah more than faithleſs *Tancred!*
Ungenerous and inhuman in thy falſhood!
Hadſt thou, this morning, when my hopeleſs heart,
Submiſſive to my fortune and my duty,
Had ſo much ſpirit left, as to be willing
To give thee back thy vows, ah! hadſt thou then
Confeſs'd the ſad neceſſity thy ſtate
Impos'd upon thee, and with gentle friendſhip,
Since we muſt part at laſt, our parting ſoften'd:
I ſhould indeed—I ſhould have been unhappy,
But not to this extream—Amidſt my grief,
I had, with penſive pleaſure, cheriſh'd ſtill
The ſweet remembrance of thy former love;
Thy image ſtill had dwelt upon my ſoul,
And made our guiltleſs woes not undelightful.
But coolly thus—How couldſt thou be ſo cruel?—
Thus to revive my hopes, to ſooth my love
And call forth all its tenderneſs, then ſink me
In black deſpair—What unrelenting pride

Poſſeſs'd

Poſſeſs'd thy breaſt, that thou couldſt bear unmov'd
To ſee me bent beneath a weight of ſhame?
Pangs thou canſt never feel! How couldſt thou drag me,
In barbarous triumph at a rival's car?
How make me witneſs to a ſight of horror?
That hand, which, but a few ſhort hours ago,
So wantonly abus'd my ſimple faith,
Before th' atteſting world given to another,
Irrevocably given!—There was a time,
When the leaſt cloud that hung upon my brow,
Perhaps imagin'd only, touch'd thy pity.
Then, brighten'd often by the ready tear,
Thy looks were ſoftneſs all; then the quick heart,
In every nerve alive, forgot it ſelf,
And for each other then we felt alone.
But now, alas! thoſe tender days are fled;
Now thou canſt ſee me wretched, pierc'd with anguiſh,
With ſtudied anguiſh of thy own creating,
Nor wet thy harden'd eye—Hold, let me think—
I wrong thee ſure; thou canſt not be ſo baſe,
As meanly in my miſery to triumph—
What is it then?—Why ſhould I ſearch for pain?—
O 'tis as bad!—'Tis fickleneſs of nature,
'Tis fickly love extinguiſh'd by ambition——
Is there, kind heaven! no conſtancy in man?
No ſteadfaſt truth, no generous fixt affection,
That can bear up againſt a ſelfiſh world?
No, there is none—Even *Tancred* is inconſtant!

[*Riſing.*

Hence

Hence! let me fly this ſcene!—Whate'er I ſee,
Theſe roofs, theſe walls, each object that ſurrounds me,
Are tainted with his vows—But whither fly?
The groves are worſe, the ſoft retreat of *Belmont*,
Its deepening glooms, gay lawns, and airy ſummits,
Will wound my buſy memory to torture,
And all its ſhades will whiſper—faithleſs *Tancred!*—
My father comes.—How, ſunk in this diſorder,
Shall I ſuſtain his preſence?

SCENE II.

SIFFREDI, SIGISMUNDA.

SIFFREDI.

Sigiſmunda,
My deareſt child! I grieve to find thee thus
A prey to tears. I know the powerful cauſe
From which they flow, and therefore can excuſe them
But not their wilful obſtinate continuance.
Come, rouſe thee then, call up thy drooping ſpirit,
Come, wake to reaſon from this dream of love,
And ſhew the world thou art *Siffredi*'s daughter.

SIGISMUNDA.

Alas! I am unworthy of that name.

SIFFREDI.

Thou art indeed to blame; thou haſt too raſhly

Engag'd thy heart, without a father's ſanction.
But this I can forgive. The king has virtues,
That plead thy full excuſe; nor was I void
Of blame, to truſt thee to thoſe dangerous virtues.
Then dread not my reproaches. Tho' he blames,
Thy tender father pities more than blames thee.
Thou art my daughter ſtill; and, if thy heart
Will now reſume its pride, aſſert itſelf,
And greatly riſe ſuperior to this trial,
I to my warmeſt confidence again
Will take thee, and eſteem thee more my daughter.

SIGISMUNDA.

O you are gentler far than I deſerve!
It is, it ever was, my darling pride,
To bend my ſoul to your ſupreme commands,
Your wiſeſt will; and tho', by love betray'd—
Alas! and puniſh'd too—I have tranſgreſs'd
The niceſt bounds of duty, yet I feel
A ſentiment of tenderneſs, a ſource
Of filial nature ſpringing in my breaſt,
That, ſhould it kill me, ſhall controul this paſſion,
And make me all ſubmiſſion and obedience
To you, my honour'd lord, the beſt of fathers.

SIFFREDI.

Come to my arms, thou comfort of my age!
Thou only joy and hope of theſe grey hairs!
Come! let me take thee to a parent's heart;
There with the kindly aid of my advice,
Even with the dew of theſe paternal tears,

Rev

evive and nouriſh this becoming ſpirit——
Then thou doſt promiſe me, my *Sigiſmunda*—
Thy father ſtoops to make it his requeſt—
Thou wilt reſign thy fond preſumptuous hopes,
And henceforth never more indulge one thought
That in the light of love regards the king?

SIGISMUNDA.

Hopes I have none! Thoſe by this fatal day
Are blaſted all—But from my ſoul to baniſh,
While weeping memory there retains her ſeat,
Thoughts which the pureſt boſom might have cheriſh'd,
Once my delight, now even in anguiſh charming,
Is more, alas! my lord, than I can promiſe.

SIFFREDI.

Abſence and time, the ſoftner of our paſſions,
Will conquer this. Mean time, I hope from thee
A generous great effort; that thou wilt now
Exert thy utmoſt force, nor languiſh thus
Beneath the vain extravagance of love.
Let not thy father bluſh to hear it ſaid,
His daughter was ſo weak, e'er to admit
A thought ſo void of reaſon, that a king
Should to his rank, his honour and his glory,
The high important duties of a throne,
Even to his throne itſelf, madly prefer
A wild romantic paſſion, the fond child
Of youthful dreaming thought and vacant hours;
That he ſhould quit his heaven-appointed ſtation,
Deſert his aweful charge, the care of all

The toiling millions which this iſle contains;
Nay more, ſhould plunge them into war and ruin:
And all to ſooth a ſick imagination,
A miſerable weakneſs—Muſt for thee,
To make thee bleſt, *Sicilia* be unhappy?
The king himſelf, loſt to the nobler ſenſe
Of manly praiſe, become the piteous heroe
Of ſome ſoft tale, and ruſh on ſure deſtruction?
Canſt thou, my daughter, let the monſtrous thought
Poſſeſs one moment thy perverted fancy?
Rouſe thee, for ſhame! and if a ſpark of virtue
Lies ſlumbering in thy ſoul, bid it blaze forth;
Nor ſink unequal to the glorious leſſon,
This day thy lover gave thee from his throne.

SIGISMUNDA.

Ah, that was not from virtue!—Had, my father,
That been his aim, I yield to what you ſay;
'Tis powerful truth, unanſwerable reaſon.
Then, then, with ſad but duteous reſignation,
I had ſubmitted as became your daughter;
But in that moment, when my humbled hopes
Were to my duty reconcil'd, to raiſe them
To yet a fonder height than e'er they knew,
Then rudely daſh them down—There is the ſting!
The blaſting view is ever preſent to me——
Why did you drag me to a fight ſo cruel?

SIFFREDI.

It was a ſcene to fire thy emulation.

SIGISMUNDA.

was a ſcene of perfidy!—But know,
will do more than imitate the king—
for he is falſe!—I, tho' ſincerely pierc'd
With the beſt, trueſt paſſion, ever touch'd
A virgin's breaſt, here vow to heaven and you,
Tho' from my heart I cannot, from my hopes
To caſt this prince.—What would you more, my father?

SIFFREDI.

Yes, one thing more—thy father then is happy—
Tho' by the voice of innocence and virtue
Abſolv'd, we live not to ourſelves alone:
A rigorous world, with peremptory ſway,
Subjects us all, and even the nobleſt moſt.
This world from thee, my honour and thy own,
Demands one ſtep; a ſtep, by which convinc'd
The king may ſee thy heart diſdains to wear
A chain which his has greatly thrown aſide.
'Tis fitting too, thy ſex's pride commands thee,
To ſhew th' approving world thou canſt reſign,
As well as he, nor with inferior ſpirit,
A paſſion fatal to the public weal.
But, above all, thou muſt root out for ever
From the king's breaſt the leaſt remain of hope,
And henceforth make his mention'd love diſhonour.
Theſe things, my daughter, that muſt needs be done,
Can but this way be done——by the ſafe refuge,
The ſacred ſhelter of a huſband's arms.
And there is one—

SIGISMUNDA.

Good heavens! what means my lord?

SIFFREDI.

One of illuſtrious family, high rank,
Yet ſtill of higher dignity and merit,
Who can and will protect thee; one to awe
The king himſelf—Nay, hear me, *Sigiſmunda*—
The noble *Oſmond* courts thee for his bride,
And has my plighted word—This day—

SIGISMUNDA *kneeling.*

My father!
Let me with trembling arms embrace thy knees!
O if you ever wiſh'd to ſee me happy;
If e'er in infant years I gave you joy,
When, as I pratling twin'd around your neck,
You ſnatch'd me to your boſom, kiſs'd my eyes,
And melting ſaid you ſaw my mother there;
O ſave me from that worſt ſeverity
Of fate! O outrage not my breaking heart
To that degree—I cannot!—'tis impoſſible!—
So ſoon withdraw it, give it to another—
Hear me, my deareſt father! hear the voice
Of nature and humanity, that plead
As well as juſtice for me!—Not to chuſe
Without your wiſe direction may be duty;
But ſtill my choice is free—That is a right,
Which even the loweſt ſlave can never loſe.
And would you thus degrade me? make me baſe?
For ſuch it were, to give my worthleſs perſon

Without

Without my heart, an injury to *Oſmond*,
The higheſt can be done—Let me, my lord—
Or I ſhall die, ſhall by the ſudden change
Be to diſtraction ſhock'd—Let me wear out
My hapleſs days in ſolitude and ſilence,
Far from the malice of a prying world!
At leaſt—you cannot ſure refuſe me this——
Give me a little time—I will do all,
All I can do, to pleaſe you!—O your eye
Sheds a kind beam—

SIFFREDI.

My daughter! you abuſe
The ſoftneſs of my nature——

SIGISMUNDA.

Here, my father,
Till you relent, here will I grow for ever!

SIFFREDI.

Riſe, *Sigiſmunda*.—Tho' you touch my heart,
Nothing can ſhake th' inexorable dictates
Of honour, duty, and determin'd reaſon.
Then by the holy ties of filial love,
Reſolve, I charge thee, to receive earl *Oſmond*,
As ſuits the man who is thy father's choice,
And worthy of thy hand—I go to bring him——

SIGISMUNDA.

Spare me, my deareſt father!

SIFFREDI, *aſide*.

I muſt ruſh
From her ſoft graſp, or nature will betray me!

O grant us, heaven! that fortitude of mind,
Which liſtens to our duty, not our paſſions—
Quit me, my child!

SIGISMUNDA.

You cannot, O my father!
You cannot leave me thus!

SIFFREDI.

Come hither, *Laura*.
Come to thy friend. Now ſhew thyſelf a friend.
Combate her weakneſs; diſſipate her tears;
Cheriſh, and reconcile her to her duty.

SCENE III.

SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

SIGISMUNDA.

O woe on woe! diſtreſt by love and duty!
O every way unhappy *Sigiſmunda!*

LAURA.

Forgive me, madam, if I blame your grief.
How can you waſte your tears on one ſo falſe?
Unworthy of your tenderneſs? to whom
Nought but contempt is due and indignation?

SIGISMUNDA.

You know not half the horrors of my fate!
I might perhaps have learn'd to ſcorn his falſehood;
Nay, when the firſt ſad burſt of tears was paſt,

I might have rous'd my pride and ſcorn'd himſelf—
But 'tis too much, this greateſt laſt misfortune—
O whither ſhall I fly? Where hide me *Laura*,
From the dire ſcene my father now prepares!

LAURA.

What thus alarms you, madam?

SIGISMUNDA.

Can it be?
Can I——ah no!——at once give to another
My violated heart? in one wild moment?
He brings earl *Oſmond* to receive my vows!
O dreadful change! for *Tancred* haughty *Oſmond!*

LAURA.

Now, on my ſoul, 'tis what an outrag'd heart,
Like your's, ſhould wiſh—I ſhould, by heavens, eſteem it
Moſt exquiſite revenge!

SIGISMUNDA.

Revenge on whom?
On my own heart, already but too wretched!

LAURA.

On him! this *Tancred!* who has baſely ſold,
For the dull form of deſpicable grandeur,
His faith, his love!—At once a ſlave and tyrant!

SIGISMUNDA.

O rail at me, at my believing folly,
My vain ill-founded hopes, but ſpare him, *Laura!*

LAURA.

Who rais'd theſe hopes? who triumphs o'er that weakneſs?

Pardon the word—You greatly merit him;
Better than him, with all his gilded pomp!
You rais'd him by your ſmiles when he was nothing!
Where is your woman pride? that guardian ſpirit
Given us to daſh the perfidy of man?
Ye powers! I cannot bear the thought with patience—
Yet recent from the moſt unſparing vows
The tongue of love e'er laviſh'd; from your hopes
So vainly, idly, cruelly deluded;
Before the public thus, before your father,
By an irrevocable ſolemn deed,
With ſuch inhuman ſcorn, to throw you from him!
To give his faithleſs hand yet warm from thine,
With complicated meanneſs, to *Conſtantia*!
And to compleat his crime, when thy weak limbs
Could ſcarce ſupport thee, then, of thee regardleſs,
To lead her off!

SIGISMUNDA.

That was indeed a ſight
To poiſon love! to turn it into rage
And keen contempt!—What means this ſtupid weakneſs
That hangs upon me? Hence unworthy tears!
Diſgrace my cheek no more! No more, my heart,
For one ſo coolly falſe or meanly fickle——
O it imports not which—dare to ſuggeſt
The leaſt excuſe!—Yes, traitor, I will wring
Thy pride, will turn thy triumph to confuſion!
I will not pine away my days for thee,

Sighing to brooks and groves; while, with vain pity,
You in a rival's arms lament my fate——
No! let me periſh! ere I tamely be
That ſoft, that patient, gentle *Sigiſmunda*,
Who can conſole her with the wretched boaſt,
She was for thee unhappy!——If I am,
I will be nobly ſo!——*Sicilia*'s daughters
Shall wondering ſee in me a great example
Of one who puniſh'd an ill-judging heart,
Who made it bow to what it moſt abhorr'd!
Cruſh'd it to miſery! for having thus
So lightly liſten'd to a worthleſs lover!

LAURA.

At laſt it mounts! the kindling pride of virtue!
Truſt me, thy marriage will embitter his——

SIGISMUNDA.

O may the furies light his nuptial torch!
Be it accurs'd as mine! for the fair peace,
The tender joys of hymeneal love,
May jealouſy awak'd, and fell remorſe,
Pour all their fierceſt venom thro' his breaſt!——
Where the fates lead, and blind revenge, I follow!——
Let me not think—By injur'd love! I vow,
Thou ſhalt, baſe prince! perfidious and inhuman!
Thou ſhalt behold me in another's arms!
In his thou hateſt! *Oſmond*'s!

LAURA.

That will grind
His heart with ſecret rage! Aye, that will ſting

His ſoul to madneſs! ſet him up a terror,
A ſpectacle of woe to faithleſs lovers!——
Your cooler thought, beſides, will of the change
Approve, and think it happy. Noble *Oſmond*
From the ſame ſtock with him derives his birth,
Firſt of *Sicilian* barons, prudent, brave,
Of ſtricteſt honour, and by all rever'd——

SIGISMUNDA.

Talk not of *Oſmond*, but perfidious *Tancred!*
Rail at him, rail! invent new names of ſcorn!
Aſſiſt me, *Laura*; lend my rage freſh fewel;
Support my ſtaggering purpoſe, which already
Begins to fail me—Ah, my vaunts how vain!
How have I ly'd to my own heart!—Alas!
My tears return, the mighty flood o'erwhelms me!
Ten thouſand crouding images diſtract
My tortur'd thought——And is it come to this?
Our hopes? our vows? our oft repeated wiſhes,
Breath'd from the fervent ſoul, and full of heaven,
To make each other happy?—come to this!

LAURA.

If thy own peace and honour cannot keep
Thy reſolution fix'd, yet, *Sigiſmunda*,
O think, how deeply, how beyond retreat,
Thy father is engag'd.

SIGISMUNDA.

Ah wretched weakneſs!
That thus enthrals my ſoul, that chaſes thence
Each nobler thought, the ſenſe of every duty!—

And

And have I then no tears for thee, my father?
Can I forget thy cares, from helpleſs years,
Thy tenderneſs for me? an eye ſtill beam'd
With love? a brow that never knew a frown?
Nor a harſh word thy tongue? Shall I for theſe
Repay thy ſtooping venerable age,
With ſhame, diſquiet, anguiſh and diſhonour?
It muſt not be!—Thou firſt of angels! come,
Sweet filial piety! and firm my breaſt!
Yes, let one daughter to her fate ſubmit,
Be nobly wretched—but her father happy!——
Laura! they come!—O heavens! I cannot ſtand
The horrid trial!—Open, open, earth!
And hide me from their view!

LAURA.

Madam!—

SCENE IV.

SIFFREDI, OSMOND, SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

SIFFREDI.

My daughter,
Behold my noble friend who courts thy hand,
And whom to call my ſon I ſhall be proud;
Nor ſhall I leſs be pleas'd in his alliance,
To ſee thee happy.

OSMOND.

OSMOND.

Think not, I preſume,
Madam, on this your father's kind conſent,
To make me bleſt. I love you from a heart,
That ſeeks your good ſuperior to my own;
And will, by every art of tender friendſhip,
Conſult your deareſt welfare. May I hope,
Yours does not diſavow your father's choice?

SIGISMUNDA.

I am a daughter, ſir—and have no power
O'er my own heart—I die—Support me, *Laura*.
[*Faints.*

SIEFREDI.

Help—Bear her off—She breathes—my daughter!—

SIGISMUNDA.

Oh!—
Forgive my weakneſs—ſoft—my *Laura*, lead me—
To my apartment.

SIEFREDI.

Pardon me, my lord,
If by this ſudden accident alarm'd
I leave you for a moment.

SCENE

SCENE V.

OSMOND *alone.*

Let me think——

What can this mean?——Is it to me averſion?
Or is it, as I fear'd, ſhe loves another?
Ha!—yes—perhaps the king, the young count *Tancred!*
They were bred up together——Surely that,
That cannot be—Has he not given his hand,
In the moſt ſolemn manner, to *Conſtantia?*
Does not his crown depend upon the deed?
No—if they lov'd, and this old ſtateſman knew it,
He could not to a king prefer a ſubject.
His virtues I eſteem—nay more, I truſt them——
So far as virtue goes—but could he place
His daughter on the throne of *Sicily*——
O 'tis a glorious bribe, too much for man!——
What is it then?—I care not what it be.
My honour now, my dignity demands,
That my propos'd alliance, by her father,
And even herſelf accepted, be not ſcorn'd.
I love her too—I never knew till now
To what a pitch I lov'd her. O ſhe ſhot
Ten thouſand charms into my inmoſt ſoul!
She look'd ſo mild, ſo amiably gentle,
She bow'd her head, ſhe glow'd with ſuch confuſion,
Such lovelineſs of modeſty! She is,
In gracious mind, in manners, and in perſon,

The

The perfect model of all female beauty!—
She must be mine—She is!—If yet her heart
Consents not to my happiness, her duty,
Join'd to my tender cares, will gain so much
Upon her generous nature—That will follow.

The man of sense, who acts a prudent part,
Not flattering steals, but forms himself the heart.

End of the Third Act.

ACT

ACT IV. SCENE I.

The garden belonging to SIFFREDI's *houſe.*

SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

SIGISMUNDA, *with a letter in her hand.*

'TIS done!—I am a ſlave!—The fatal vow
Has paſs'd my lips!—Methought in thoſe ſad moments,
The tombs around, the ſaints, the darken'd altar,
And all the trembling ſhrines with horror ſhook.
But here is ſtill new matter of diſtreſs.
O *Tancred* ceaſe to perſecute me more!
O grudge me not ſome calmer ſtate of woe!
Some quiet gloom to ſhade my hopeleſs days,
Where I may never hear of love and thee!——
Has *Laura* too conſpir'd againſt my peace?
Why did you take this letter?—bear it back—
[*Giving her the letter.*
I will not court new pain.

LAURA.

Madam, *Rodolpho*

Urg'd

Urg'd me ſo much, nay, even with tears conjur'd me,
But this once more to ſerve th' unhappy king—
For ſuch he ſaid he was—that tho' enrag'd,
Equal with thee, at his inhuman falſehood,
I could not to my brother's fervent prayers
Refuſe this office—Read it—His excuſes
Will only more expoſe his falſehood.

SIGISMUNDA.

No.
It ſuits not *Oſmond*'s wife to read one line
From that contagious hand—ſhe knows too well!

LAURA.

He paints him out diſtreſs'd beyond expreſſion,
Even on the point of madneſs. Wild as winds,
And fighting ſeas, he raves. His paſſions mix,
With ceaſeleſs rage, all in each giddy moment.
He dies to ſee you and to clear his faith.

SIGISMUNDA.

Save me from that!—That would be worſe than all!

LAURA.

I but report my brother's words; who then
Began to talk of ſome dark impoſition,
That had deceiv'd us all: when, interrupted,
We heard your father and earl *Oſmond* near,
As ſummon'd to *Conſtantia*'s court they went.

SIGISMUNDA.

Ha! impoſition?—Well!—If I am doom'd
To be, o'er all my ſex, the wretch of love,
In vain I would reſiſt—Give me the letter——

To

To know the worst is some relief——Alas!
It was not thus, with such dire palpitations,
That, *Tancred*, once I us'd to read thy letters.

[*Attempting to read the letter, but gives it to* Laura.

Ah, fond remembrance blinds me!—Read it, *Laura*.

LAURA *reads*.

Deliver me, Sigismunda, *from that most exquisite misery which a faithful heart can suffer—To be thought base by her, from whose esteem even virtue borrows new charms. When I submitted to my cruel situation, it was not falshood you beheld, but an excess of love. Rather than endanger that, I for a while gave up my honour. Every moment till I see you stabs me with severer pangs than real guilt itself can feel. Let me then conjure you to meet me in the garden, towards the close of the day, when I will explain this mystery. We have been most inhumanly abused; and that by the means of the very paper which I gave you, from the warmest sincerity of love, to assure to you the heart and hand of*

Tancred.

SIGISMUNDA.

There, *Laura*, there, the dreadful secret sprung!
That paper! ah that paper! it suggests
A thousand horrid thoughts—I to my father
Gave it; and he perhaps—I dare not cast
A look that way—if yet indeed you love me,
O blast me not, kind *Tancred*, with the truth!
O pitying keep me ignorant for ever!
What strange peculiar misery is mine?

Reduc'd

Reduc'd to wiſh the man I love were falſe!
Why was I hurry'd to a ſtep ſo raſh?
Repairleſs woe!—I might have waited, ſure,
A few ſhort hours—No duty that forbade—
I ow'd thy love that juſtice; till this day
Thy love an image of all-perfect goodneſs!
A beam from heaven that glow'd with every virtue!
And have I thrown this prize of life away?
The piteous wreck of one diſtracted moment?
Ah the cold prudence of remorſeleſs age!
Ah parents, traitors to your children's bliſs!
Ah curs'd, ah blind revenge!—On every hand
I was betray'd—You, *Laura*, too, betray'd me!—

LAURA.

Who, who, but he, whate'er he writes, betray'd you?
Or falſe or puſillanimous. For once,
I will with you ſuppoſe, that his agreement
To the king's will was forg'd.—Tho' forg'd by whom?
Your father ſcorns the crime.—Yet what avails it?
This, if it clears the truth, condemns his ſpirit.
A youthful king, by love and honour fir'd,
Patient to ſit on his inſulted throne,
And let an outrage, of ſo high a nature,
Unpuniſh'd paſs, uncheck'd, uncontradicted—
O 'tis a meanneſs equal even to falſhood!

SIGISMUNDA.

Laura, no more—We have already judg'd
Too largely without knowledge. Oft, what ſeems
A trifle, a mere nothing, by itſelf,

In

In ſome nice ſituations, turns the ſcale
Of fate, and rules the moſt important actions.
Yes, I begin to feel a ſad preſage:—
I am undone, from that eternal ſource
Of human woes—The judgment of the paſſions.
But what have I to do with theſe excuſes?
O ceaſe my treacherous heart to give them room!
It ſuits not thee to plead a lover's cauſe;
Even to lament my fate is now diſhonour.
Nought now remains, but with relentleſs purpoſe,
To ſhun all interviews, all clearing up
Of this dark ſcene; to wrap myſelf in gloom,
In ſolitude and ſhades; there to devour
The ſilent ſorrows ever ſwelling here;
And ſince I muſt be wretched—for I muſt——
To claim the mighty miſery myſelf,
Engroſs it all, and ſpare a hapleſs father.
Hence, let me fly!—the hour approaches——

LAURA.

Madam,
Behold he comes—the king—

SIGISMUNDA.

Heavens! how eſcape?
No—I will ſtay—This one laſt meeting—Leave me.

SCENE

SCENE II.

TANCRED, SIGISMUNDA.

TANCRED.

And are theſe long long hours of tortures paſt?
My life! my *Sigiſmunda!*

[*Throwing himſelf at her feet.*

SIGISMUNDA.

Riſe, my lord.
To ſee my ſovereign thus no more becomes me.

TANCRED.

O let me kiſs the ground on which you tread!
Let me exhale my ſoul in ſofteſt tranſport!
Since I again embrace my *Sigiſmunda!*

[*Riſing.*

Unkind! how couldſt thou ever deem me falſe?
How thus diſhonour love?—O I could much
Embitter my complaint!—How low were then
Thy thoughts of me? How didſt thou then affront
The human heart itſelf? After the vows,
The fervent truth, the tender proteſtations,
Which mine has often pour'd, to let thy breaſt,
Whate'er the appearance was, admit ſuſpicion?

SIGISMUNDA.

How! when I heard myſelf your full conſent
To the late king's ſo juſt and prudent will?
Heard it before you read, in ſolemn ſenate?

When

When I beheld you give your royal hand,
To her, whoſe birth and dignity, of right,
Demands that high alliance? Yes, my lord,
You have done well. The man, whom heaven appoints
To govern others, ſhould himſelf firſt learn
To bend his paſſions to the ſway of reaſon.
In all you have done well; but when you bid
My humbled hopes look up to you again,
And ſooth'd with wanton cruelty my weakneſs—
That too was well—My vanity deſerv'd
The ſharp rebuke, whoſe fond extravagance
Could ever dream to balance your repoſe,
Your glory and the welfare of a people.

TANCRED.

Chide on, chide on. Thy ſoft reproaches now
Inſtead of wounding, only ſooth my fondneſs.
No, no, thou charming conſort of my ſoul!
I never lov'd thee with ſuch faithful ardor,
As in that cruel miſerable moment
You thought me falſe; when even my honour ſtoop'd
To wear for thee a baffled face of baſeneſs.
It was thy barbarous father, *Sigiſmunda*,
Who caught me in the toil. He turn'd that paper,
Meant for th' aſſuring bond of nuptial love,
To ruin it for ever; he, he wrote
That forg'd conſent, you hear'd, beneath my name,
Nay dar'd before my outrag'd throne to read it!
Had he not been thy father—Ha! my love!
You tremble, you grow pale.

SIGISMUNDA.

Oh leave me, *Tancred!*

TANCRED.

No!—Leave thee?—Never! never! till you ſet
My heart at peace, till theſe dear lips again
Pronounce thee mine! Without thee I renounce
My ſelf, my friends, the world—Here on this hand—

SIGISMUNDA.

My lord, forget that hand, which never now
Can be to thine united——

TANCRED.

Sigiſmunda!
What doſt thou mean? Thy words, thy look, thy manner,
Seem to conceal ſome horrid ſecret—heavens!——
No—That was wild—Diſtraction fires the thought!—

SIGISMUNDA.

Enquire no more——I never can be thine.

TANCRED.

What, who ſhall interpoſe? who dares attempt
To brave the fury of an injur'd king?
Who, ere he ſees thee raviſh'd from his hopes,
Will wrap all blazing *Sicily* in flames——

SIGISMUNDA.

In vain your power, my lord—This fatal error,
Join'd to my father's unrelenting will,
Has plac'd an everlaſting bar betwixt us—
I am—earl *Oſmond*'s—Wife.

TANCRED

TANCRED.

Earl *Osmond*'s wife!——

[*After a long pauſe, during which they look at one another with the higheſt agitation and moſt tender diſtreſs.*

Heavens! did I hear thee right? what! marry'd?
marry'd!
Loſt to thy faithful *Tancred!* loſt for ever!
Couldſt thou then doom me to ſuch matchleſs woe,
Without ſo much as hearing me?—Diſtraction!—
Alas! what haſt thou done? Ah, *Sigiſmunda!*—
Thy raſh credulity has done a deed,
Which of two happieſt lovers—that ere felt
The bliſsful power, has made two finiſh'd wretches!
But—Madneſs!—Sure, thou knowſt it cannot be!
This hand is mine! a thouſand thouſand vows——

SCENE III.

TANCRED, OSMOND, SIGISMUNDA.

OSMOND.

[*Snatching her hand from the king.*

Madam, this hand, by the moſt ſolemn rites,
A little hour ago, was given to me,
And did not ſovereign honour now command me,
Never but with my life to quit my claim,
I would renounce it——thus!

TANCRED.

Ha! who art thou!
Presumptuous man?

SIGISMUNDA, *aside.*

Where is my father? heavens!
[*Goes out.*

OSMOND.

One thou shouldst better know—Yes—view me—one!
Who can and will maintain his rights and honour,
Against a faithless prince, an upstart king,
Whose first base deed is what a harden'd tyrant
Would blush to act.

TANCRED.

Insolent *Osmond!* know,
This upstart king will hurl confusion on thee,
And all who shall invade his sacred rights,
Prior to thine—Thine founded on compulsion,
On infamous deceit; while his proceed
From mutual love and free long-plighted faith.
She is, and shall be mine!—I will annul,
By the high power with which the laws invest me,
Those guilty forms in which you have entrap'd,
Basely entrap'd, to thy detested nuptials,
My queen betroth'd; who has my heart, my hand,
And shall partake my throne—If, haughty lord,
If this thou didst not know, then know it now!
And know besides, as I have told thee this,
Shouldst thou but think to urge thy treason further——
Than treason more! Treason against my love!——

Thy

Thy life ſhall anſwer for it!

OSMOND.

Ha! my life!——

It moves my ſcorn to hear thy empty threats.
When was it that a *Norman* baron's life
Became ſo vile, as on the frown of kings
To hang?—Of that, my lord, the law muſt judge:
Or if the law be weak, my guardian ſword—

TANCRED.

Dare not to touch it, traitor! leſt my rage
Break looſe, and do a deed that miſbecomes me.

SCENE IV.

TANCRED, SIFFREDI, OSMOND.

SIFFREDI *entering.*

My gracious lord! what is it I behold?
My ſovereign in contention with his ſubjects?
Surely this houſe deſerves from royal *Tancred*
A little more regard than to be made
A ſcene of trouble and unſeemly jars.
It grieves my ſoul, it baffles every hope,
It makes me ſick of life, to ſee thy glory
Thus blaſted in the bud—Heavens! can your highneſs
From your exalted character deſcend,
The dignity of virtue; and, inſtead
Of being the protector of our rights,

The holy guardian of domeſtic bliſs,
Unkindly thus diſturb the ſweet repoſe,
The ſacred peace of families, for which
Alone the free-born race of man to laws
And government ſubmitted?

TANCRED.

My lord *Siffredi*,
Spare thy rebuke. The duties of my ſtation
Are not to me unknown—But thou, old man,
Doſt thou not bluſh to talk of rights invaded?
And of our beſt our deareſt bliſs diſturb'd?
Thou! who with more than barbarous perfidy
Haſt trampl'd all allegiance, juſtice, truth,
Humanity itſelf, beneath thy feet?
Thou knowſt thou haſt—I could, to thy confuſion,
Return thy hard reproaches; but I ſpare thee
Before this lord, for whoſe ill-ſorted friendſhip
Thou haſt moſt baſely ſacrific'd thy daughter.
Farewel, my lord!—For thee, lord conſtable,
Who doſt preſume to lift thy ſurly eye
To my ſoft love, my gentle *Sigiſmunda*,
I once again command thee, on thy life———
Yes—chew thy rage—but mark me—on thy life,
No further urge thy arrogant pretenſions!

SCENE

SCENE V.

SIFFREDI, OSMOND.

OSMOND.

Ha! arrogant pretenſions! heaven and earth!
What! arrogant pretenſions to my wife?
My wedded wife! Where are we? In a land
Of civil rule, of liberty and laws?———
Not on my life purſue them?—Giddy prince!
My life diſdains thy nod. It is the gift
Of parent heaven, who gave me too an arm,
A ſpirit to defend it againſt tyrants.
The *Norman* race, the ſons of mighty *Rollo*,
Who ruſhing in a tempeſt from the north,
Great nurſe of generous freemen! bravely won
With their own ſwords their ſeats, and ſtill poſſeſs them
By the ſame noble tenure, are not us'd
To hear ſuch language—If I now deſiſt,
Then brand me for a coward! deem me villain!
A traitor to the public! By this conduct
Deceiv'd, betray'd, inſulted, tyranniz'd.
Mine is a common cauſe. My arm ſhall guard,
Mix'd with my own, the rights of each *Sicilian*,
Of ſocial life, and of mankind in general.
Ere to thy tyrant rage they fall a prey,
I ſhall find means to ſhake thy tottering throne,
Which this illegal, this perfidious uſage

Forfeits at once, and crush thee in the ruins!—
Constantia is my queen!

SIFFREDI.

Lord constable,
Let us be stedfast in the right; but let us
Act with cool prudence, and with manly temper,
As well as manly firmness. True, I own,
Th' indignities you suffer are so high,
As might even justify what now you threaten.
But if, my lord, we can prevent the woes,
The cruel horrors of intestine war,
Yet hold untouch'd our liberties and laws;
O let us, rais'd above the turbid sphere
Of little selfish passions, nobly do it!
Nor to our hot intemperate pride pour out
A dire libation of *Sicilian* blood.
Tis godlike magnanimity, to keep,
When most provok'd, our reason calm and clear,
And execute her will, from a strong sense
Of what is right, without the vulgar aid
Of heat and passion, which, tho' honest, bear us
Often too far. Remember that my house
Protects my daughter still; and ere I saw her
Thus ravish'd from us by the arm of power,
This hand should act the *Roman* father's part.
Fear not; be temperate; all will yet be well.
I know the king. At first his passions burst
Quick as the lightning's flash: but in his breast

Honour

Honour and juſtice dwell—Truſt me, to reaſon
He will return.

OSMOND.

He will!—By heavens, he ſhall!—
You know the king—I wiſh, my lord *Siffredi*,
That you had deign'd to tell me all you knew—
And would you have me wait, with duteous patience,
Till he return to reaſon? Ye juſt powers!
When he has planted on our necks his foot,
And trod us into ſlaves; when his vain pride
Is cloy'd with our ſubmiſſion; if, at laſt,
He finds his arm too weak to ſhake the frame
Of wide-eſtabliſh'd order out of joint,
And overturn all juſtice; then, perchance,
He, in a fit of ſickly kind repentance,
May make a merit to return to reaſon.
No, no, my lord!—There is a nobler way,
To teach the blind oppreſſive *Fury* reaſon:
Oft has the luſtre of avenging ſteel
Unſeal'd her ſtupid eyes—The ſword is reaſon!

SCENE VI.

SIFFREDI, OSMOND, RODOLPHO. *(with guards.*

RODOLPHO.

My lord high-conſtable of *Sicily*,
In the king's name, and by his ſpecial order,
I here arreſt you priſoner of ſtate.

OSMOND.

What king? I know no king of *Sicily*—
Unleſs he be the huſband of *Conſtantia*.

RODOLPHO.

Then know him now——Behold his royal orders
To bear you to the caſtle of *Palermo*.

SIFFREDI.

Let the big torrent foam its madneſs off.
Submit, my lord—No caſtle long can hold
Our wrongs—This, more than friendſhip or alliance,
Confirms me thine; this binds me to thy fortunes,
By the ſtrong tie of common injury,
Which nothing can diſſolve——I grieve, *Rodolpho*,
To ſee the reign, in ſuch unhappy ſort,
Begin.

OSMOND.

The reign! the uſurpation call it!
This meteor king may blaze a while, but ſoon
Muſt ſpend his idle terrors—Sir, lead on——

Farewel,

Farewel, my lord——More than my life and fortune,
Remember well, is in your hands——my honour!

SIFFREDI.

Our honour is the ſame. My ſon, farewel——
We ſhall not long be parted. On theſe eyes
Sleep ſhall not ſhed his balm, till I behold thee
Reſtor'd to freedom, or partake thy bonds.

Even noble courage is not void of blame,
Till nobler patience ſanctifies its flame.

End of the Fourth Act.

ACT V. SCENE I.

SIFFREDI, *alone.*

THE proſpect lowrs around. I found the king,
Tho' calm'd a little, with ſubſiding tempeſt,
As ſuits his generous nature, yet in love
Abated nought, moſt ardent in his purpoſe;
Inexorably fix'd, whate'er the riſque,
To claim my daughter, and diſſolve this marriage——
I have embark'd, upon a perilous ſea,
A mighty treaſure. Here the rapid youth,
Th' impetuous paſſions of a lover-king
Check my bold courſe; and there, the jealous pride,
Th' impatient honour of a haughty lord
Of the firſt rank, in intereſt and dependants
Near equal to the king, forbid retreat.
My honour too, the ſame unchang'd conviction,
That theſe my meaſures were, and ſtill remain
Of abſolute neceſſity, to ſave
The land from civil fury, urge me on.
But how proceed?—I only faſter ruſh
Upon the deſperate evils I would ſhun.

What-

Whate'er the motive be, deceit, I fear,
And harſh unnatural force are not the means
Of public welfare or of private bliſs—
Bear witneſs, Heaven! Thou mind-inſpecting eye!
My breaſt is pure. I have prefer'd my duty,
The good and ſafety of my fellow-ſubjects,
To all thoſe views that fire the ſelfiſh race
Of men, and mix them in eternal broils.

Enter an Officer belonging to SIFFREDI.

OFFICER.

My lord, a man of noble port, his face
Wrap'd in diſguiſe, is earneſt for admiſſion.

SIFFREDI.

Go, bid him enter— [*Officer goes out.*
Ha! wrap'd in diſguiſe!
And at this late unſeaſonable hour!
When o'er the world tremendous midnight reigns,
By the dire gloom of raging tempeſt doubled—

SCENE II.

SIFFREDI, OSMOND *diſcovering himſelf.*

SIFFREDI.

What! ha! earl *Oſmond*, you?—Welcome, once more,
To this glad roof!—But why in this diſguiſe?
Would I could hope the king exceeds his promiſe!

I have his faith ſoon as to-morrow's ſun
Shall gild *Sicilia*'s cliffs, you ſhall be free.——
Has ſome good angel turn'd his heart to juſtice?

OSMOND.

It is not by the favour of count *Tancred*
That I am here. As much I ſcorn his favour,
As I defy his tyranny and threats——
Our friend *Goffredo*, who commands the caſtle,
On my parole, ere dawn, to render back
My perſon, has permitted me this freedom.
Know then; the faithleſs outrage of to-day,
By him committed whom you call the king,
Has rouz'd *Conſtantia*'s court. Our friends, the friends
Of virtue, juſtice, and of public faith,
Ripe for revolt, are in high ferment all.
This, this, they ſay, exceeds whate'er deform'd
The miſerable days we ſaw beneath
William the bad. This ſaps the ſolid baſe,
At once, of government and private life;
This ſhameleſs impoſition on the faith,
The majeſty of ſenates, this lewd inſult,
This violation of the rights of men.
Added to theſe, his ignominious treatment
Of her th' illuſtrious offſpring of our kings,
Sicilia's hope, and now our royal miſtreſs.
You know, my lord, how groſly theſe infringe
The late king's will; which orders, if count *Tancred*
Make not *Conſtantia* partner of his throne,
That he be quite excluded the ſucceſſion,

And

And ſhe to *Henry* given, king of the *Romans*,
The potent emperor *Barbaroſſa*'s ſon,
Who ſeeks with earneſt inſtance her alliance.
I thence of you, as guardian of the laws,
As guardian of this Will to you intruſted,
Deſire, nay more, demand, your inſtant aid,
To ſee it put in vigorous execution.

SIFFREDI.

You cannot doubt, my lord, of my concurrence.
Who more than I have labour'd this great point?
'Tis my own plan. And, if I drop it now,
I ſhould be juſtly branded with the ſhame
Of raſh advice, or deſpicable weakneſs.
But let us not precipitate the matter.
Conſtantia's friends are numerous and ſtrong;
Yet *Tancred*'s, truſt me, are of equal force.
E'er ſince the ſecret of his birth was known,
The people all are in a tumult hurl'd
Of boundleſs joy, to hear there lives a prince
Of mighty *Guiſcard*'s line. Numbers, beſides,
Of powerful barons, who at heart had pin'd,
To ſee the reign of their renown'd forefathers,
Won by immortal deeds of matchleſs valour,
Paſs from the gallant *Normans* to the *Suevi*,
Will with a kind of rage, eſpouſe his cauſe—
'Tis ſo, my lord—be not by paſſion blinded——
'Tis ſurely ſo—O if our prating virtue
Dwells not in words alone—O let us join,
My generous *Oſmond*, to avert theſe woes,

And

And yet ſuſtain our tottering *Norman* kingdom?

OSMOND.

But how, *Siffredi*? how!—If by ſoft means
We can maintain our rights, and ſave our country,
May his unnatural blood firſt ſtain the ſword,
Who with unpitying fury firſt ſhall draw it!

SIFFREDI.

I have a thought—The glorious work be thine.
But it requires an awful flight of virtue,
Above the paſſions of the vulgar breaſt,
And thence from thee I hope it, noble *Oſmond*——
Suppoſe my daughter, to her God devoted,
Were plac'd within ſome convent's ſacred verge,
Beneath the dread protection of the altar——

OSMOND.

Ere then, by heavens! I would devoutly ſhave
My holy ſcalp, turn whining monk my ſelf,
And pray inceſſant for the tyrant's ſafety!——
What! How! becauſe an inſolent invader,
A ſacrilegious tyrant, in contempt
Of all thoſe nobleſt rights, which to maintain
Is man's peculiar pride, demands my wife;
That I ſhall thus betray a common cauſe
Of human kind, and tamely yield her up,
Even in the manner you propoſe—O then
I were ſupremely vile! degraded! ſham'd!
The ſcorn of manhood! and abhor'd of honour!

SIFFREDI.

There is, my lord, an honour, the calm child

Of

Of reaſon, of humanity and mercy,
Superior far to this punctilious demon,
That ſingly minds itſelf, and oft embroils
With proud barbarian niceties the world!

OSMOND.

My lord, my lord!—I cannot brook your prudence—
It holds a pulſe unequal to my blood——
Unblemiſh'd honour is the flower of virtue!
The vivifying ſoul! and he who ſlights it
Will leave the other dull and lifeleſs droſs.

SIFFREDI.

No more——You are too warm.

OSMOND.

You are too cool.

SIFFREDI.

Too cool, my lord? I were indeed too cool,
Not to reſent this language, and to tell thee——
I wiſh earl *Oſmond* were as cool as I
To his own ſelfiſh bliſs—ay, and as warm
To that of others—But of this no more——
My daughter is thy wife—I gave her to thee,
And will againſt all force maintain her thine.
But think not I will catch thy headlong paſſions,
Whirl'd in a blaze of madneſs o'er the land;
Or, till the laſt extremity compel me,
Riſque the dire means of war—The king to-morrow
Will ſet you free; and, if by gentle means
He does not yield my daughter to your arms,
And wed *Conſtantia*, as the will requires,

Why

Why then expect me on the ſide of juſtice——
Let that ſuffice.

OSMOND.

It does—Forgive my heat.
My rankled mind, by injuries inflam'd,
May be too prompt to take and give offence.

SIFFREDI.

'Tis paſs'd—Your wrongs, I own, may well tranſport
The wiſeſt mind—But henceforth, noble *Oſmond*,
Do me more juſtice, honour more my truth,
Nor mark me with an eye of ſquint ſuſpicion——
Theſe jars apart—You may repoſe your ſoul
On my firm faith and unremitting friendſhip.
Of that I ſure have given exalted proof,
And the next ſun we ſee ſhall prove it further——
Return, my ſon, and from your friend *Goffredo*
Releaſe your word. There try, by ſoft repoſe,
To calm your breaſt.

OSMOND.

Bid the vext ocean ſleep,
Swept by the pinions of the raging north——
But your frail age, by care and toil exhauſted,
Demands the balm of all repairing reſt.

SIFFREDI.

Soon as to-morrow's dawn ſhall ſtreak the ſkies,
I, with my friends in ſolemn ſtate aſſembled,
Will to the palace, and demand your freedom.
Then by calm reaſon, or by higher means,
The king ſhall quit his claim, and in the face

Of *Sicily*, my daughter ſhall be yours.
Farewel.

OSMOND.

My lord, good night.

SCENE III.

OSMOND *alone.* [*After a long pauſe.*

I like him not———
Yes—I have mighty matter of ſuſpicion.
'Tis plain—I ſee it lurking in his breaſt,
He has a fooliſh fondneſs for this king—
My honour is not ſafe, while here my wife
Remains—Who knows but he this very night
May bear her to ſome convent as he mention'd—
The king too—tho' I ſmother'd up my rage,
I mark'd it well—will ſet me free to-morrow.
Why not to-night? He has ſome dark deſign—
By heavens! he has—I am abus'd moſt groſly;
Made the vile tool of this old ſtateſman's ſchemes;
Marry'd to one—Ay, and he knew it—one
Who loves young *Tancred!* Hence her ſwooning, tears,
And all her ſoft diſtreſs, when ſhe diſgrac'd me
By baſely giving her perfidious hand
Without her heart—Hell and perdition! this,
This is the perfidy!—This is the fell,
The keen, envenom'd, exquiſite diſgrace!

Which

Which to a man of honour even exceeds
The falſhood of the perſon—But I now
Will rouze me from the poor tame lethargy,
By my believing fondneſs caſt upon me.
I will not wait his crawling timid motions,
Perhaps to blind me meant, which he to-morrow
Has promis'd to purſue. No! ere his eyes
Shall open on to-morrow's orient beam,
I will convince him that earl *Osmond* never
Was form'd to be his dupe—I know full well
Th' important weight and danger of the deed:
But to a man, whom greater dangers preſs,
Driven to the brink of infamy and horror,
Raſhneſs itſelf, and utter deſperation,
Are the beſt prudence—I will bear her off
This night, and lodge her in a place of ſafety.
I have a truſty band that waits not far.
Hence! let me loſe no time—One rapid moment
Should ardent form, at once, and execute
A bold deſign—'Tis ſa'd—'Tis done!—Yes, then,
When I have ſeiz'd the prize of love and honour,
And with a friend ſecur'd her; to the caſtle
I will repair, and claim *Goffredo*'s promiſe
To riſe with all his garriſon—my friends
With brave impatience wait. The mine is laid,
And only wants my kindling touch to ſpring.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

SIGISMUNDA's *Apartment.*

SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

LAURA.

Heavens! 'tis a fearful night!

SIGISMUNDA.

Ah! the black rage
Of midnight tempeſt, or th' aſſuring ſmiles
Of radiant morn are equal all to me.
Nought now has charms or terrors to my breaſt,
The ſeat of ſtupid woe!—Leave me, my *Laura.*
Kind reſt, perhaps, may huſh my woes a little—
Oh for that quiet ſleep that knows no morning!

LAURA.

Madam, indeed I know not how to go.
Indulge my fondneſs—Let me watch a while
By your ſad bed, till theſe dread hours ſhall paſs.

SIGISMUNDA.

Alas! what is the toil of elements,
This idle perturbation of the ſky,
To what I feel within!—Oh that the fires
Of pitying heaven would point their fury here!
Good night, my deareſt *Laura!*

LAURA.

Oh I know not

What

What this oppreſſion means—but 'tis with pain,
With tears, I can perſuade myſelf to leave you—
Well then—Good night, my deareſt *Sigiſmunda!*

SCENE V.

SIGISMUNDA.

And am I then alone?—The moſt undone,
Moſt wretched being now beneath the cope
Of this affrighting gloom that wraps the world!—
I ſaid I did not fear—Ah me! I feel
A ſhivering horror run thro' all my powers!
O I am nought but tumult, fears and weakneſs!
And yet how idle fear when hope is gone,
Gone, gone for ever!—O thou gentle ſcene
[Looking towards her bed.
Of ſweet repoſe, where by th' oblivious draught
Of each ſad toilſome day, to peace reſtor'd
Unhappy mortals loſe their woes a while,
Thou haſt no peace for me!—What ſhall I do?
How paſs this dreadful night, ſo big with terror?—
Here, with the midnight ſhades, here will I ſit,
[Sitting down.
A prey to dire deſpair, and ceaſeleſs weep
The hours away—Bleſs me!—I heard a noiſe——
[Starting up.
No—I miſtook—Nothing but ſilence reigns

And

And awful midnight round—Again!—O heavens!
My lord the king!

SCENE VI.

TANCRED, SIGISMUNDA.

TANCRED.

Be not alarm'd, my love!

SIGISMUNDA.

My royal lord! why at this midnight hour,
How came you hither?

TANCRED.

By that ſecret way
My love contriv'd, when we, in happier days,
Us'd to devote theſe hours, ſo much in vain,
To vows of love and everlaſting friendſhip.

SIGISMUNDA.

Why will you thus perſiſt to add new ſtings
To her diſtreſs, who never can be thine?
O fly me! fly! You know———

TANCRED.

I know too much.
O how I could reproach thee, *Sigiſmunda!*
Pour out my injur'd ſoul in juſt complaints!
But now the time permits not, theſe ſwift moments—
I told thee how thy father's artifice
Forc'd me to ſeem perfidious in thine eyes.

Ah,

Ah, fatal blindneſs! not to have obſerv'd
The mingled pangs of rage and love that ſhook me;
When, by my cruel public ſituation
Compell'd, I only feign'd conſent, to gain
A little time, and more ſecure thee mine.
E'er ſince—A dreadful interval of care!——
My thoughts have been employ'd, not without hope,
How to defeat *Siffredi*'s barbarous purpoſe.
But thy credulity has ruin'd all,
Thy raſh, thy wild—I know not what to name it——
Oh it has prov'd the giddy hopes of man
To be deluſion all, and ſickening folly!

SIGISMUNDA.

Ah, generous *Tancred!* ah thy truth deſtroys me!
Yes, yes, 'tis I, 'tis I alone am falſe!
My haſty rage, join'd to my tame ſubmiſſion,
More than the moſt exalted filial duty
Could e'er demand, has daſh'd our cup of fate
With bitterneſs unequal'd—But, alas!
What are thy woes to mine?—to mine! juſt heaven!—
Now is thy turn of vengeance—hate, renounce me!
O leave me to the fate I well deſerve,
To ſink in hopeleſs miſery!—at leaſt,
Try to forget the worthleſs *Sigiſmunda!*

TANCRED.

Forget thee! No! Thou art my ſoul itſelf!
I have no thought, no hope, no wiſh but thee!
Even this repented injury, the fears,
That rouſe me all to madneſs, at the thought

Of

Of loſing thee, the whole collected pains
Of my full heart, ſerve but to make thee dearer!
Ah, how forget thee!—Much muſt be forgot,
Ere *Tancred* can forget his *Sigiſmunda!*

SIGISMUNDA.

But you, my lord, muſt make that great effort.

TANCRED.

Can *Sigiſmunda* make it?

SIGISMUNDA.

Ah! I know not
With what ſucceſs——But all that feeble woman
And love-entangled reaſon can perform,
I, to the utmoſt, will exert to do it.

TANCRED.

Fear not—'Tis done!—If thou canſt form the thought,
Succeſs is ſure—I am forgot already!

SIGISMUNDA.

Ah, *Tancred!*—But, my lord, reſpect me more.
Think who I am—What can you now propoſe?

TANCRED.

To claim the plighted vows which heaven has heard,
To vindicate the rights of holy love
By faith and honour bound, to which compar'd
Theſe empty forms, which have enſnar'd thy hand,
Are impious guile, abuſe, and profanation——
Nay, as a king, whoſe high prerogative
By this unlicens'd marriage is affronted,
To bid the laws themſelves pronounce it void.

SIGIS-

SIGISMUNDA.

Honour, my lord, is much too proud to catch
At every ſlender twig of nice diſtinctions.
Theſe for th' unfeeling vulgar may do well:
But thoſe, whoſe ſouls are by the nicer rule
Of virtuous delicacy nobly ſway'd,
Stand at another bar than that of laws.
Then ceaſe to urge me—Since I am not born
To that exalted fate to be your queen———
Or, yet a dearer name—to be your wife!——
I am the wife of an illuſtrious lord
Of your own princely blood; and what I am,
I will with proper dignity remain.
Retire, my royal lord—There is no means
To cure the wounds this fatal day has given.
We meet no more!

TANCRED.

Oh barbarous *Sigiſmunda!*
And canſt thou talk thus ſteadily? thus treat me
With ſuch unpitying, unrelenting rigour?
Poor is the love, that rather than give up
A little pride, a little formal pride,
The breath of vanity, can bear to ſee
The man, whoſe heart was once ſo dear to thine
By many a tender vow ſo mix'd together,
A prey to anguiſh, fury and diſtraction!—
Thou canſt not ſurely make me ſuch a wretch,
Thou canſt not, *Sigiſmunda!* Yet relent,
O ſave us yet!—*Rodolpho*, with my guards,

Waits,

Waits in the garden—Let us ſeize the moments
We ne'er may have again—With more than power
I will aſſert thee mine, with faireſt honour.
The world ſhall even approve; each honeſt boſom
Swell with a kindred joy to ſee us happy.

SIGISMUNDA.

The world approve!—What is the world to me?
The conſcious mind is its own awful world.——
And yet, perhaps, if thou wert not a king,
I know not, *Tancred*, what I might have done.
Then, then, my conduct, ſanctify'd by love,
Could not be deem'd, by the ſevereſt judge,
The mean effect of intereſt, or ambition.
But now not all my partial heart can plead,
Shall ever ſhake th' unalterable dictates
That tyrannize my breaſt.

TANCRED.

'Tis well—No more—
I yield me to my fate—Yes, yes inhuman!
Since thy barbarian heart is ſteel'd by pride,
Shut up to love and pity, here behold me
Caſt on the ground, a vile and abject wretch!
Loſt to all cares, all dignities, all duties!
Here will I grow, breathe out my faithful ſoul,
Here, at thy feet—Death, death alone ſhall part us!

SIGISMUNDA.

Have you then vow'd to drive me to perdition?
What can I more?—Yes, *Tancred!* once again
I will forget the dignity my ſtation

Commands me to ſuſtain—for the laſt time
Will tell thee, that, I fear, no ties, no duty,
Can ever root thee from my hapleſs boſom.
O leave me! fly me! were it but in pity!—
To ſee what once we tenderly have lov'd,
Cut off from every hope—cut off for ever!
Is pain thy generoſity ſhould ſpare me.
Then riſe, my lord; and if you truly love me;
If you reſpect my honour, nay, my peace,
Retire! for tho' th' emotions of my heart
Can ne'er alarm my virtue; yet, alas!
They tear it ſo, they pierce it with ſuch anguiſh—
Oh 'tis too much!—I cannot bear the conflict!

SCENE VII.

TANCRED, OSMOND, SIGISMUNDA.

OSMOND, *entering.*

Turn, tyrant! turn! and anſwer to my honour,
For this thy baſe inſufferable outrage!

TANCRED.

Inſolent traitor! think not to eſcape
Thyſelf my vengeance! [*They fight.* Oſmond *falls.*

SIGISMUNDA.

Help here! Help!—O heavens!
[*Throwing herſelf down by him.*
Alas! my lord, what meant your headlong rage?

That

That faith, which I, this day, upon the altar
To you devoted, is unblemiſh'd, pure,
As veſtal truth; was reſolutely yours,
Beyond the power of aught on earth to ſhake it.

OSMOND.

Perfidious woman! die!——

[*Shortening his ſword, he plunges it into her breaſt.*

and to the grave
Attend a huſband, yet but half aveng'd!

TANCRED.

O horror! horror! execrable villain!

OSMOND.

And, tyrant! thou!—Thou ſhalt not o'er my tomb
Exult—'Tis well—'Tis great!—I die content.—[*Dies.*

SCENE VIII.

TANCRED, SIFFREDI, RODOLPHO, SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

TANCRED.

[*Throwing himſelf down by* Sigiſmunda.

Quick! here! bring aid!—All in *Palermo* bring
Whoſe ſkill can ſave her!—Ah! that gentle boſom
Pours faſt the ſtreams of life.

SIGISMUNDA.

All aid is vain,
I feel the powerful hand of death upon me——

But, oh! it ſheds a ſweetneſs thro' my fate,
That I am thine again; and without blame,
May in my *Tancred*'s arms reſign my ſoul!

TANCRED.

Oh, death is in that voice! ſo gently mild,
So ſadly ſweet, as mixes even with mine
The tears of hovering angels!—Mine again!———
And is it thus the cruel fates have join'd us?
Are theſe the horrid nuptials they prepare
For love like ours? Is virtue thus rewarded?
Let not my impious rage accuſe juſt heaven!
Thou, *Tancred!* Thou! haſt murder'd *Sigiſmunda!*
That furious man was but the tool of fate,
I, I the cauſe!—But I will do thee juſtice
On this deaf heart! that to thy tender wiſdom
Refus'd an ear—Yes, death ſhall ſoon unite us!

SIGISMUNDA.

Live, live, my *Tancred!*—Let my death ſuffice
To expiate all that may have been amiſs.
May it appeaſe the fates, avert their fury
From thy propitious reign! Mean time, of me
And of thy glory mindful, live, I charge thee,
To guard our friends, and make thy people happy—
[*Obſerving* Siffredi *fixt in aſtoniſhment and grief.*
My father!———Oh! how ſhall I lift my eyes
To thee my ſinking father!

SIFFREDI.

Awful heaven!
I am chaſtis'd!——My deareſt child!——

SIGIS-

SIGISMUNDA.

Where am I?
A fearful darkneſs cloſes all around—
My friends! We needs muſt part—I muſt obey
Th' imperious call—Farewel, my *Laura!* cheriſh
My poor afflicted father's age—*Rodolpho*,
Now is the time to watch th' unhappy king,
With all the care and tenderneſs of friendſhip—
Oh my dear father! bow'd beneath the weight
Of age and grief—the victim even of virtue,
Receive my laſt adieu!—Where art thou, *Tancred?*
Give me thy hand—But ah! it cannot ſave me
From the dire king of terrors, whoſe cold power
Creeps o'er my heart——Oh!

TANCRED.

How theſe pangs diſtract me;
O lift thy gracious eyes!——Thou leav'ſt me then!
Thou leav'ſt me, *Sigiſmunda!*

SIGISMUNDA.

Yet a moment——
I had, my *Tancred*, ſomething more to ſay——
Yes——but thy love and tenderneſs for me
Sure makes it needleſs—Harbour no reſentment
Againſt my father; venerate his zeal,
That acted from a principle of goodneſs,
From faithful love to thee—Live and maintain
My innocence imbalm'd, with holieſt care
Preſerve my ſpotleſs memory!——I die——
ETERNAL MERCY take my trembling ſoul!

Oh! 'tis the only ſting of death to part
From thoſe we love—from thee—farewel, my *Tancred!*
[*Dies.*

TANCRED.

Thus then!

[*Flying to his ſword is held by* Rodolpho.

RODOLPHO.

Hold! hold! my lord—Have you forgot
Your *Sigiſmunda's* laſt requeſt already?

TANCRED.

Off! ſet me free! Think not to bind me down,
With barbarous friendſhip, to the rack of life!
What hand can ſhut the thouſand thouſand gates,
Which death ſtill opens to the woes of mortals?——
I ſhall find means—No power in earth or heaven
Can force me to endure the hateful light,
Thus robb'd of all that lent it joy and ſweetneſs!
Off! traitors! off! or my diſtracted ſoul
Will burſt indignant from this jail of nature,
To where ſhe beckons yonder—No, mild ſeraph!
Point not to life——I cannot linger here,
Cut off from thee, the miſerable pity,
The ſcorn of human-kind!——A trampled king!
Who let his mean poor-hearted love, one moment,
To coward prudence ſtoop; who made it not
The firſt undoubting action of his reign,
To ſnatch thee to his throne, and there to ſhield thee,
Thy helpleſs boſom from a ruffian's fury!——
O ſhame! O agony! O the fell ſting

Of

Of late, of vain repentance!——Hah! my brain
Is all on fire! a wild abyſs of thought!——
Th' infernal world diſcloſes! See! behold him!
Lo! with fierce ſmiles he ſhakes the bloody ſteel,
And mocks my feeble tears!—Hence! quickly, hence!
Spurn his vile carcaſs! give it to the dogs!
Expoſe it to the winds and ſcreaming ravens!
Or hurl it down that fiery ſteep to hell,
There with his ſoul to toſs in flames for ever!——
Ah, impotence of rage!—What am I?—Where?
Sad, ſilent, all?—The forms of dumb deſpair,
Around ſome mournful tomb!—What do I ſee?
This ſoft abode of innocence and love
Turn'd to the houſe of death! a place of horror!——
Ah! that poor corſe! pale! pale! deform'd with murder?
Is that my *Sigiſmunda!*

[*Throwing himſelf down by her.*

SIFFREDI.

[*After a pathetic pauſe, looking on the ſcene before him.*

Have I liv'd
To theſe enfeebled years, by heaven reſerv'd,
To be a dreadful monument of juſtice?—
Rodolpho, raiſe the king, and bear him hence
From this diſtracting ſcene of blood and death.
Alas! I dare not give him my aſſiſtance;
My care would only more enflame his rage.

Behold the fatal work of my dark hand,
That by rude force the paſſions would command,

That ruthleſs ſought to root them from the breaſt;
They may be rul'd, but will not be oppreſt.
Taught hence, ye parents, who from nature ſtray,
And the great ties of ſocial life betray;
Ne'er with your children act a tyrant's part:
'Tis yours to guide, not violate the heart.
Ye vainly wiſe, who o'er mankind preſide,
Behold my righteous woes, and drop your pride!
Keep virtue's ſimple path before your eyes,
Nor think from evil good can ever riſe.

End of the Fifth Act.

EPI-

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Miſs BUDGELL.

CRamm'd to the throat with wholeſome moral ſtuff,
Alas! poor audience! you have had enough.
Was ever hapleſs heroine of a play
In ſuch a piteous plight as ours to-day?
Was ever woman ſo by love betray'd?
Match'd with two huſbands, and yet—die a maid.
But bleſs me!—hold—What ſounds are theſe I hear!—
I ſee the Tragic Muſe herſelf appear.

The back-ſcene opens, and diſcovers a romantic Sylvan landſkip; from which Mrs. *Cibber*, in the character of the Tragic Muſe, advances ſlowly to muſic, and ſpeaks the following lines.

Hence with your flippant epilogue, that tries
To wipe the virtuous tear from Britiſh *eyes;*
That dares my moral, tragic ſcene profane,
With ſtrains—at beſt, unſuiting, light and vain.

Hence from the pure unſully'd beams that play
In yon fair eyes where virtue ſhines—Away!
Britons, *to you from chaſte* Caſtalian *groves,*
Where dwell the tender, oft unhappy loves;
Where ſhades of heroes roam, each mighty name,
And court my aid to riſe again to fame;
To you I come, to freedom's nobleſt ſeat,
And in Britannia *fix my laſt retreat.*
In Greece *and* Rome, *I watch'd the public weal;*
The purple tyrant trembled at my ſteel:
Nor did I leſs o'er private ſorrows reign,
And mend the melting heart with ſofter pain.
On France *and* You *then roſe my brightning ſtar,*
With ſocial ray—The Arts *are ne'er at war.*
O as your fire and genius ſtronger blaze,
As yours are generous freedom's bolder lays,
Let not the Gallic *taſte leave yours behind,*
In decent manners and in life refin'd;
Baniſh the motley mode, to tag low verſe,
The laughing ballad to the mournful herſe.
When thro' five acts your hearts have learnt to glow,
Touch'd with the ſacred force of honeſt woe;
O keep the dear impreſſion on your breaſt,
Nor idly loſe it for a wretched jeſt.

CORI-

CORIOLANUS.

A

TRAGEDY.

PROLOGUE.

Written by

The Hon. GEORGE LYTTELTON, Eſq;

Spoken by Mr. *Quin*.

I Come not here your candour to implore
For ſcenes, whoſe author is, alas! no more;
He wants no advocate his cauſe to plead;
You will yourſelves be patrons of the dead.
No party his benevolence confin'd,
No ſect—alike it flow'd to all mankind.
He lov'd his friends (forgive this guſhing tear:
Alas! I feel I am no actor here)
He lov'd his friends with ſuch a warmth of heart,
So clear of int'reſt, ſo devoid of art,
Such generous freedom, ſuch unſhaken zeal,
No words can ſpeak it, but our tears may tell.——
O candid truth, O faith without a ſtain,
O manners gently firm, and nobly plain,
O ſympathizing love of others bliſs,
Where will you find another breaſt like his?
Such was the man—the poet well you know:
Oft has he touch'd your hearts with tender woe:

Oft

PROLOGUE.

Oft in this crouded houſe, with juſt applauſe,
You heard him teach fair virtue's pureſt laws;
For his chaſte muſe employ'd her heav'n-taught lyre
None but the nobleſt paſſions to inſpire,
Not one immoral, one corrupted thought,
One line, which dying he could wiſh to blot.
Oh, may to-night your favourable doom
Another laurel add to grace his tomb:
Whilſt he, ſuperior now to praiſe or blame,
Hears not the feeble voice of human fame.
Yet if to thoſe whom moſt on earth he lov'd,
From whom his pious care is now remov'd,
With whom his liberal hand, and bounteous heart,
Shar'd all his little fortune could impart;
If to thoſe friends your kind regard ſhall give
What they no longer can from his receive,
That, that, even now, above yon ſtarry pole,
May touch with pleaſure his immortal ſoul.

Perſons

Perſons repreſented.

CAIUS MARCIUS CORIOLANUS.	Mr. *Quin.*
ATTIUS TULLUS, general of the *Volſcian* army.	Mr. *Ryan.*
GALESUS, one of the deputies of the *Volſcian* ſtates attending the camp.	Mr. *Dolane.*
The other deputies of the *Volſcian* ſtates.	
VOLUSIUS, one of the principal *Volſcian* officers.	Mr. *Sparks.*
TITUS, freed-man of GALESUS.	Mr. *Ridout.*
MARCUS MINUCIUS, conſul and principal of the deputation from *Rome* to CORIOLANUS.	Mr. *Bridgwater.*
POSTHUMUS COMINIUS, a conſular ſenator, one of the deputation, and who had been the *Roman* general at the taking of *Corioli.*	Mr. *Anderſon.*
VETURIA, mother of CORIOLANUS.	Mrs. *Woffington.*
VOLUMNIA, wife of CORIOLANUS.	Miſs *Bellamy.*

Roman ſenators, prieſts, augurs, *&c.* of the firſt deputation. *Roman* ladies, in the train of VETURIA and VOLUMNIA, of the ſecond deputation.

Volſcian OFFICERS, LICTORS, SOLDIERS, *&c.*

SCENE, The *Volſcian* Camp.

CORIOLANUS.

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

The Volſcian *Camp.*

ATTIUS TULLUS, VOLUSIUS.

VOLUSIUS.

WHence is it, *Tullus*, that our arms are ſtopt
Here on the borders of the *Roman* ſtate?
Why ſleeps that ſpirit, whoſe heroic ardor
Urg'd you to break the truce, and pour'd our hoſt,
From all th' united cantons of the *Volſci*,

On

On their unguarded frontier? Such deſigns
Brook not an hour's delay; their whole ſucceſs
Depends on inſtant vigorous execution.

TULLUS.

Voluſius, I approve thy brave impatience;
And will to thee, in confidence of friendſhip,
Diſcloſe my ſecret ſoul. Thou know'ſt *Galeſus*,
Whoſe freedom *Caius Marcius*, once his gueſt,
Of all the ſpoil of ſack'd *Corioli*,
Alone demanded; and who thence to *Rome*,
From gratitude and friendſhip, follow'd *Marcius*;
Whence lately to our *Antium* he return'd,
With overtures of peace propos'd by *Rome*.

VOLUSIUS.

I know him well; an antiquated ſage
Of that romantic ſchool *Pythagoras*
Eſtabliſh'd here on our *Heſperian* ſhore;
Whoſe gentle dictates only ſerve to tame
Enfeebled mortals into ſlaves.

TULLUS.

Galeſus,
Doubtleſs, poſſeſſes many civil virtues;
Is gentle, good; for rectitude of heart
And innocence of life by all rever'd.

VOLUSIUS.

Pardon me, *Tullus*, if my faithful bluntneſs
Deems you too lib'ral in his praiſe. In peace
Such may perhaps do well, when prating rules
An idle world; but in tempeſtuous times

They

They are ſtark naught, theſe viſionary ſtateſmen,
Fit rulers only for their golden age.
The rugged genius of rapacious *Rome*
For other men, and other counſels, calls.

TULLUS.

Your thoughts are mine—I only meant to tell thee
The part he bears in this ill-tim'd delay.
Soon as our gather'd army march'd from *Antium*,
The *Roman* ſenate, whoſe attentive caution
Watch'd all our motions, took at once th' alarm;
And ſent a herald, ere we paſt their borders,
With formal ceremony, to demand
The cauſe of our approach.—Had I been maſter,
I would have anſwer'd at the gates of *Rome*.
But this *Galeſus*, who attends our camp
Among the *Volſcian* deputies, ſo pleaded
The laws of nations, made ſuch loud complaints
Againſt th' infraction of the public faith,
So teaz'd us with the pedantry of ſtates,
That I was forc'd, unwilling, to permit
His freedman *Titus*, to be ſent to *Rome*
With our demands. If theſe the ſenate grants,
We then are in the toils of peace entangled,
In ſpite of all my efforts to avoid them.

VOLUSIUS.

O 'tis a wild chimera! Peace with *Rome!*
Dream not of that, unleſs the *Volſcian* courage
Is quite ſubdu'd, and only ſeeks to gild
A vile ſubmiſſion with that ſpecious name.

Learn

Learn wiſdom from your neighbours. Peace with *Rome*
Has quell'd the *Latines*, tam'd their freeborn ſpirit,
And by her friendſhip honour'd them with chains.

TULLUS.

She ne'er will grant it on the juſt conditions
I now have brought the *Volſci* to demand:
The reſtitution of our conquer'd cities,
And fair alliance upon equal terms.
I know the *Roman* inſolence will ſcorn
To yield to this: and *Titus* muſt return
Within three days, the longeſt term allow'd him;
Of which the third is near elaps'd already.
Then even *Galeſus* will not dare to ſtop us
With ſuperſtitious forms, and ſolemn trifles,
From letting looſe th' unbridled rage of war
Againſt thoſe hated tyrants of *Heſperia*.

VOLUSIUS.

Thanks to the gods! my ſword will then be free.
Then, poor *Corioli!* thy bleeding wounds,
Thy treaſures ſack'd, thy captive matrons,
Shall amply be reveng'd by thy *Voluſius*:
Then, *Tullus*, from the lofty brows of *Marcius*
Thou may'ſt regain the wreaths his conquering hand,
By partial fortune aided, tore from thine.

TULLUS.

O my *Voluſius!* thou, who art a ſoldier,
A try'd and brave one too, ſay, in thy heart
Doſt thou not ſcorn me? thou, who ſaw'ſt me bend
Beneath the half-ſpent thunder of a foe,

Warm

Warm from the conqueſt of *Corioli*,
Which, ruſhing furious in with thoſe, whoſe ſally
He had repell'd, he ſeiz'd almoſt alone;
And gave to fire and ſword. Yet thence he flew,
Scorning the plunder of our richeſt city,
His wounds undreſt, without a moment's reſpite,
To where our armies on the fearful edge
Of battle ſtood; and, aſking of the conſul
To be oppos'd to me, with mighty rage,
Reſiſtleſs, bore us down.

VOLUSIUS.

True valour, *Tullus*,
Lies in the mind, the never-yielding purpoſe,
Nor owns the blind award of giddy fortune.

TULLUS.

My ſoul, my friend, my ſoul is all on fire!
Thirſt of revenge conſumes me! the revenge
Of generous emulation, not of hatred.
This happy *Roman*, this proud *Marcius* haunts me.
Each troubled night when ſlaves and captives ſleep,
Forgetful of their chains, I, in my dreams,
Anew am vanquiſh'd; and, beneath the ſword
With horror ſinking, feel a tenfold death,
The death of honour. But I will redeem—
Yes, *Marcius*, I will yet redeem my fame.
To face thee once again is the great purpoſe
For which alone I live.—Till then how ſlow,
How tedious lags the time! while ſhame corrodes me,
With many a bitter thought; and injur'd honour
Sick, and deſponding, preys upon itſelf.

VOLUSIUS.

VOLUSIUS.

It faſt approaches now, the hour of vengeance,
To this fam'd land, to antient *Latium* due.
Unbalanc'd *Rome*, at variance with herſelf,
To order loſt, in deep and hot commotion,
Stands on the dangerous point of civil war;
Her haughty nobles and ſeditious commons
Reviling, fearing, hating one another:
While, on our part, all wears a proſperous face;
Our troops united, numerous, high in ſpirit,
As if their gen'ral's ſoul inform'd them all.
O long-expected day!

TULLUS.

Go, brave *Voluſius*,
Go breathe thy ardour into every breaſt,
That when the *Volſcian* envoy ſhall return,
Whom ere the cloſe of evening I expect,
One ſpirit may unite us in the cauſe
Of generous freedom, and our native rights,
So long oppreſs'd by *Rome*'s encroaching power.

SCENE II.

TULLUS, *alone.*

Galeſus ſaid that *Marcius* ſtands for conſul.
O favour thou his ſuit, propitious *Jove!*
That I may brave him at his army's head,
In all the majeſty of ſovereign power!

That

That the whole conduct of the war may reſt
On us alone, and prove by its deciſion,
Which of the two is worthieſt to command——

SCENE III.

TULLUS, OFFICER.

TULLUS.

Ha! why this haſte? you look alarm'd.

OFFICER.

My lord,
One of exalted port, his viſage hid,
Has plac'd himſelf upon your ſacred hearth,
Beneath the dread protection of your *Lares*;
And ſits majeſtic there in ſolemn ſilence.

TULLUS.

Did you not aſk him who, and what he was?

OFFICER.

My lord, I could not ſpeak; I felt appall'd,
As if the preſence of ſome God had ſtruck me.

TULLUS.

Come, daſtard! let me find this man of terrors.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

The back ſcene opens, and diſcovers CORIOLANUS *as deſcribed above.*

CORIOLANUS, TULLUS.

TULLUS, *after ſome ſilence.*

Illuſtrious ſtranger—for thy high demeanour
Beſpeaks thee ſuch—who art thou?

CORIOLANUS.

[*Riſing and unmuffling his face.*

View me, *Tullus*—

[*After ſome pauſe.*

Doſt thou not know me?

TULLUS.

No. That noble front
I never ſaw before. What is thy name?

CORIOLANUS.

Does not the ſecret voice of hoſtile inſtinct,
Does not thy ſwelling heart declare me to thee?

TULLUS.

Gods! can it be?——

CORIOLANUS.

Yes. I am *Caius Marcius*;
Known to thy ſmarting country by the name
Of *Coriolanus*. That alone is left me,
That empty name, for all my toils, my ſervice,

The

The blood which I have ſhed for thankleſs *Rome*.
Behold me baniſh'd thence, a victim yielded
By her weak nobles to the maddening rabble.
I ſeek revenge. Thou may'ſt employ my ſword,
With keener edge, with heavier force againſt her,
Than e'er it fell upon the *Volſcian* nation.
But if thou, *Tullus*, doſt refuſe me this,
The only wiſh of my collected heart,
Where every paſſion in one burning point
Concenters, give me death: Death from thy hand
I ſure have well deſerv'd—Nor ſhall I bluſh
To take or life or death from *Attius Tullus*.

TULLUS.

O *Caius Marcius!* in this one ſhort moment,
That we have friendly talk'd, my raviſh'd heart
Has undergone a great, a wonderous change.
I ever held thee in my beſt eſteem;
But this heroic confidence has won me,
Stampt me at once thy friend. I were indeed
A wretch as mean as this thy truſt is noble,
Could I refuſe thee thy demand—Yes, *Marcius!*
Thou haſt thy wiſh! take half of my command.
If that be not enough, then take the whole.
We have, my friend, a gallant force on foot,
An army, *Marcius*, fit to follow thee.
Go lead them on, and take thy full revenge.
All ſhould unite to puniſh the ungrateful.
Ingratitude is treaſon to mankind.

CORIOLANUS, *embracing him.*

Thus, generous *Tullus*, take a ſoldier's thanks,
Who is not practis'd in the gloſs of words——
Thou friend in deed! friend to my cauſe, my quarrel!
Friend to the darling paſſion of my ſoul!
All elſe I ſet at nought!—Immortal gods!
I am new-made, and wonder at myſelf!
A little while ago, and I was nothing;
A powerleſs reptile, crawling on the earth,
Curs'd with a ſoul that reſtleſs wiſh'd to wield
The bolts of *Jove!* I dwelt in *Erebus*,
I wander'd through the hopeleſs gloom of hell,
Stung with revenge, tormented by the furies!
Now, *Tullus*, like a god, you draw me thence,
Throne me amidſt the ſkies, with tempeſt charg'd,
And put the ready thunder in my hand!

TULLUS.

What I have promis'd, *Marcius*, I will do.
Within an hour at fartheſt we expect
The freedman of *Galeſus* back from *Rome*,
Who carry'd to the ſenate our demands.
Their anſwer will, I doubt not, end the truce,
And inſtant draw our angry ſwords againſt them.
Till then retire within my inmoſt tent,
Unknown to all but me, that when our chiefs
Meet in full council to declare for war,
I may produce thee to their wondering eyes,
As if deſcended from avenging heaven

To

To humble lofty *Rome*, and teach her juſtice.

CORIOLANUS.

To thy direction, *Tullus*, I reſign
My future life: my fate is in thy hands;
And, if I judge aright, the fate of *Rome*.

End of the Firſt Act.

ACT II. SCENE I.

GALESUS, TITUS.

GALESUS.

INDEED! my *Titus*, I had hopes that *Rome*,
Vext as ſhe is with her domeſtic broils,
Her frontier weak, her armies unprepar'd,
Might have comply'd with our demands, and given us
The ſame alliance granted to the *Latines*.

TITUS.

The ſenate ſcarce would hear the terms I offer'd;
But order'd me to bring this anſwer back:
" If firſt the *Volſci* take up arms, the *Romans*
" Will be the laſt to lay them down."

GALESUS.

Alas!
This anſwer ſeals the doom of many a wretch.
Unchain'd *Bellona* from her temple ruſhes,
With all the crimes and vices in her train.
Earth fades at her approach. To rural peace,
Fair plenty, and the ſocial joy of cities,
Soon will ſucceed rage, rapine, devaſtation,

Each

Each cruel horror ſanctify'd by names.
O mortals! mortals! when will you, content
With nature's bounty, that in fuller flow,
Still as your labours open more its ſources,
Abundant guſhes o'er the happy world;
When will you baniſh violence, and outrage,
To dwell with beaſts of prey in woods and deſarts?

TITUS.

Never till *Rome* ſhall change her conquering maxims.

GALESUS.

Her haughty ſpirit now will ſoar beyond
Its uſual pitch, upborne by *Caius Marcius*.
Stands he not for the conſulate?

TITUS.

He did.
But is no more a citizen of *Rome*.

GALESUS.

What mean'ſt thou, *Titus*?

TITUS.

Marcius is from *Rome*
Baniſh'd for ever.

GALESUS.

O immortal powers!
On what pretence could they to exile doom
Their wiſeſt captain, and their braveſt ſoldier?
Nor leſs renown'd for piety, for juſtice,
An uncorrupted heart, and pureſt manners.

TITUS.

The charge againſt him was entirely groundleſs.

What not his enemies themſelves believ'd,
Affecting of tyrannic power in *Rome.*
His real crime was only ſome hot words,
Struck from his fiery temper, in the ſenate,
Againſt thoſe factious miniſters of diſcord,
The tribunes of the people. They to rage,
And frantic fury, rous'd the mad plebeians;
By whom ſupported in their bold attempt,
They durſt preſume to ſummon to the bar
Of an enrag'd and partial populace,
The moſt illuſtrious ſenator of *Rome.*
To this the nobles yielded—and, with his,
Gave up their own and children's rights for ever.

GALESUS.

O ſhameful weakneſs in a *Roman* ſenate,
So much renown'd for firmneſs! yet, my *Titus,*
Spite of my love to *Marcius,* I muſt own it,
The vigorous ſoil whence his heroic virtues
Luxuriant riſe, if not with careful hand
Severely weeded, teems with imperfections.
His lofty ſpirit brooks no oppoſition.
His rage, if once offended, knows no bounds.
He deems plebeians, with patrician blood
Compar'd, the creatures of a lower ſpecies,
Mere menial hands by nature meant to ſerve him.

TITUS.

It was this high patrician pride undid him.
The furious people triumph'd in his ruin
As if they had expell'd another *Tarquin:*

While,

While, like a captive train, the vanquiſh'd nobles
Hung their dejected heads in ſilent ſhame.
Marcius alone ſeem'd unconcern'd; though deep
The latent tempeſt boil'd within his breaſt,
Choak'd up and ſmother'd with exceſſive rage.

GALESUS.

You were his gueſt at *Rome*, and therefore, *Titus*,
Might on this ſad occaſion be permitted
To join your tears with his domeſtic friends.
Saw you that moving ſcene?

TITUS.

I did, *Galeſus*.
I follow'd *Marcius* home—His mother, there,
Veturia, the moſt venerable matron
Theſe eyes have e'er beheld, and ſoft *Volumnia*,
His lovely virtuous wife, amidſt his children,
Spread on the ground, lay loſt in dumb deſpair.
He ſwelling ſtood a while, and could not ſpeak,
Th' affronted hero ſtruggling with the man;
Then thus at laſt he broke the gloomy ſilence;
" 'Tis done. The guilty ſentence is pronounc'd.
" Ungrateful *Rome* has caſt me from her boſom.
" Support this blow with fortitude and courage,
" As it becomes two generous *Roman* matrons.
" I recommend my children to your care.
" Farewel. I go, I quit, without regret,
" A city grown an enemy to virtue."

GALESUS.

Oh godlike *Marcius*! Oh unconquer'd ſtrength

And dignity of mind! How much ſuperior
Is ſuch a ſoul to all the power of fortune!

TITUS.

This ſaid, he ſternly try'd to break away:
When, holding in his hand his eldeſt ſon,
Veturia follow'd; while the poor *Volumnia*,
All drown'd in tears, and bearing in one arm
Their youngeſt, yet an infant, with the other
Hung clinging at his knees—he, turning to them,
Half ſoften'd, half ſevere, breath'd from his ſoul
Theſe broken accents—"Ceaſe your vain complaints.
"Mother, you have no more a ſon; and thou,
"Thou beſt of women! thou, my dear *Volumnia!*
"No more a huſband"—Pierc'd with theſe dire words
Volumnia lifeleſs ſunk: and off he flung,
With wild precipitation.

GALESUS.

Thy ſad tale
Blinds my old eyes with tears—But whither, tell me,
O whither, *Titus*, bent he then his courſe?

TITUS.

Where the blind genius of regardleſs rage
And deſperation led. On to the gate,
Capena call'd, attended by the nobles,
He ſtalk'd in ſullen majeſty along;
Nor deign'd a word. A godlike virtuous anger
Beam'd through his features, and ſublim'd his air.
With down-caſt eyes he walk'd; or, if aſide
He chanc'd to look, each look was great reproach.

Thus

Thus in emphatic ſilence, that made words
Void and inſipid all, he parted from them,
The day preceding my return from *Rome*;
Nor has been heard of ſince, loſt in th' abyſs
Of his own woes.

GALESUS.

O *Marcius*, noble *Marcius!*
How ſhall my friendſhip ſuccour thy diſtreſs?
Where ſhall I find thee, to partake thy ſorrows,
And make myſelf companion of thy exile?
But, *Titus*, we indulge diſcourſe too long—
Go, and aſſemble thou the *Volſcian* chiefs,
Whilſt I repair to *Tullus*, to inform,
And bring him to the council, there to hear
The fatal anſwer thou haſt brought from *Rome*.

SCENE II.

Changes to TULLUS's *tent.*

CORIOLANUS, TULLUS.

CORIOLANUS.

Forgive me, *Tullus*, if I count the moments
That ſtop the purpoſe of thy noble kindneſs,
And keep me here confin'd in tame inaction.
Why lingers *Titus?*

TULLUS.

Calm thy reſtleſs heart,
Brave *Marcius*; every minute I expect him.
Soon from the cloud that hides thee, ſhalt thou break
With double brightneſs; ſoon thy fiery rage
Shall wither all the ſtrength and pride of *Rome*.

CORIOLANUS.

O righteous *Jove*, protector of the injur'd!
If from my earlieſt youth, with pious awe,
I ſtill have reverenc'd thy all-powerful juſtice,
Still by her ſacred dictates rul'd my actions;
O let that juſtice now ſupport my cauſe,
And arm my ſtrong right-hand with all her terrors!
When that is done, be death or life my lot,
As thy almighty pleaſure ſhall determine.

[*Enter an Officer to* Tullus.

OFFICER.

My lord, *Galeſus* aſks admittance to you.

TULLUS.

Marcius, retire an inſtant, till I hear
The buſineſs brings him hither—Bid him enter.

[*Exit Officer and* Coriolanus.

[*Enter* Galeſus.

SCENE

SCENE III.

TULLUS, GALESUS.

GALESUS.

Tullus, the *Roman* ſenate has return'd
No other anſwer to our late demands,
But abſolute denial and defiance.

TULLUS.

It is what I expected—We ſhall teach them
An humbler language ſoon—Haſt thou aſſembled,
As I deſir'd, the *Volſcian* chiefs in council?

GALESUS.

Titus is gone to ſummon their attendance,

TULLUS.

It is enough—Come forth my noble gueſt!
And ſhew *Galeſus* how the gods aſſiſt us.

SCENE IV.

CORIOLANUS, TULLUS, GALESUS.

GALESUS.

O my aſtoniſh'd ſoul: what do I ſee?
What! *Caius Marcius! Caius Marcius* here,
Beneath one tent with *Tullus?*

TULLUS.

Ay, and more,
With *Tullus*, now his friend and fellow ſoldier.
Yes, thou ſhalt ſee him thundering at the head
Of *Volſcian* armies; he who oft has carry'd
Deſtruction thro' their ranks—Your leave a moment,
While to our chiefs, and fathers, I announce
Their unexpected gueſt.

SCENE V.

CORIOLANUS, GALESUS.

CORIOLANUS.

Thou good old man!
Cloſe let me fmain thee to my faithful heart,
Which now is doubly thine, united more
By the protection which thy country gives me,
Than by our former friendſhip.

GALESUS.

Strange event!
This is thy work, almighty providence!
Whoſe power, beyond the ſtretch of human thought,
Revolves the orbs of empire; bids them ſink
Deep in the deadning night of thy diſpleaſure,
Or riſe majeſtic o'er a wondering world.
The gods by thee—I ſee it, *Coriolanus*,—
Mean to exalt us, and depreſs the *Romans*.

CORIO-

CORIOLANUS.

Galeſus, yes, the gods have ſent me hither;
Thoſe righteous gods, who, when vindictive juſtice
Excites them to deſtroy a worthleſs people,
Make their own crimes and follies ſtrike the blow.

GALESUS.

Cheriſh theſe thoughts, that teach us what we are,
And tame the pride of man. There is a power,
Unſeen, that rules th' illimitable world,
That guides its motions, from the brighteſt ſtar,
To the leaſt duſt of this ſin-tainted mold;
While man, who madly deems himſelf the lord
Of all, is nought but weakneſs and dependance.
This ſacred truth, by ſure experience taught,
Thou muſt have learnt, when, wandering all alone,
Each bird, each inſect, flitting thro' the ſky,
Was more ſufficient for itſelf, than thou——
Ah the full image of thy woes diſſolves me!
The pangs that muſt have torn, at parting from thee,
Thy mother and thy wife. I cannot think
Of that ſad ſcene without ſome drops of pity!

CORIOLANUS.

Who was it forc'd me to that bitter parting?
Who, in one cruel, haſty moment, chas'd me
From wife, from children, friends, and houſhold gods,
Me! who ſo often had protected theirs?
Who, from the ſacred city of my fathers
Drove me with nature's commoners to dwell,
To lodge beneath their wide unſhelter'd roof,
And at their table feed? O blaſt me, gods!

With

With ev'ry woe! debility of mind,
Diſhonour, juſt contempt, and palſy'd weakneſs,
If I forgive the villains! yes, *Galeſus*,
Yes, I will offer to the powers of vengeance
A great, a glorious victim—a whole city!——
Why, *Tullus*, this delay?

GALESUS.

May *Coriolanus*
Be to the *Volſcian* nation, and himſelf,
The dread, the godlike inſtrument of juſtice!
But let not rage and vengeance mix their rancour;
Let them not trouble with their fretful ſtorm,
Their angry gleams, that azure, where enthron'd
The calm divinity of juſtice ſits,
And pities, while ſhe puniſhes, mankind.

CORIOLANUS.

What ſaidſt thou? What, againſt the powers of vengeance?
The gods gave honeſt anger, juſt revenge,
To be the awful guardians of the rights
And native dignity of human kind.
O were it not for them, the ſaucy world
Would grow a noiſome neſt of little tyrants!
Each carrion crow, on eagle merit perch'd,
Would peck his eyes out, and the mungril cur
At pleaſure bait the lion—No, *Galeſus*,
I would not raſhly, nor on light occaſion,
Receive the deep impreſſion in my breaſt;
But when the baſe, the brutal and unjuſt,

Or

Or worſe than all, th' ungrateful, ſtamp it there;
O I will then with luxury ſupreme,
Enjoy the pleaſure of offended gods,
A righteous, juſt revenge!—Behold my ſoul.

[*Enter an officer.*

OFFICER.

My lords, th' aſſembled chiefs deſire your preſence.

GALESUS.

Come, noble *Marcius*; let my joyful hand
Conduct thee thither—Doubt not thy reception
Will be proportion'd to thy fame and merit.

SCENE VI.

The back ſcene opens, and diſcovers the deputies of the Volſcian *States, aſſembled in council. They riſe and ſalute* Coriolanus; *then reſume their places.*

GALESUS, TULLUS, CORIOLANUS, SENATORS.

GALESUS.

Aſſembled ſtates, and captains of the *Volſci*,
Behold the chief ſo much renown'd in war;
Our once ſo formidable foe, but now
Our proffer'd friend and ſoldier—*Caius Marcius.*

1ſt SENATOR.

We give him hearty welcome from our ſouls.

CORI-

CORIOLANUS.

Moſt noble chiefs, and fathers of the *Volſci*,
I need not ſay, how by the people's rage,
And the poor weakneſs of the timid nobles,
I am expell'd from *Rome*. Had I confin'd
My wiſhes merely to a ſafe retreat,
Some *Latine* city might have given me that;
Or any nameleſs corner. What imports it,
Where a tame patient exile rots in ſilence?
But, *Volſcian* lords, permit me to declare,
I would at once cut ſhort my uſeleſs days,
Rather than be that deſpicable wretch,
Who neither can take vengeance on his foes,
Nor ſerve his friends. That is my temper, chiefs.
I ſhall be glad to merit, by my ſword,
Th' aſylum which I ſeek among the *Volſci*.
Rome is our common foe: Then let us join
Our common ſufferings, paſſions, and reſentments.
Yes, tho' but one, I bring ſo many wrongs,
So large a ſhare of powerful enmity,
Into the war, as gives me the preſumption,
To offer to the *Volſcian* ſtates th' alliance
Even of my ſingle arm.——

TULLUS.

That ſingle arm
Is in itſelf a numerous army, *Marcius*;
The *Volſcians* ſo eſteem it—But proceed.

CORIOLANUS.

I will not mention, *Volſcian* chiefs, what talent

The

The world allows me to poſſeſs in war:
But be that what it will, you may employ it.
Soldier, or captain, in whatever ſtation
You place me, I will loſe each drop of blood,
Or with this hand I'll fix the *Volſcian* ſtandard
On the proud towers of capitolian *Jove*.

TULLUS.

Chiefs of the *Volſcian* league, I give you joy
Of our new citizen, the noble *Marcius*.
The genius of the *Volſcian* ſtate has ſent him,
Whetted by wrongs into a keener hatred
Than that we bear to *Rome*. It were contemning,
With impious ſelf-ſufficient arrogance,
This bounty of the gods, not to accept,
With every mark of honour, of his ſervice.
I, *Volſcians*, I, even *Attius Tullus*, give,
Firſt of you all, my voice, that *Caius Marcius*
Be now receiv'd to high command among us;
That inſtantly we do appoint him general
Of half our troops, which here, with your conſent,
I to him yield.—Speak, chiefs, is this your pleaſure?

1ſt SENATOR.

It is,—We give unanimous conſent.

TULLUS, *embracing him.*

Marcius, I joy to call thee my companion,
And collegue in this war.

CORIOLANUS.

By all the gods!
Thou art the generous victor of my ſoul!

Yes,

Yes *Tullus*, I am conquer'd by thy virtue.

GALESUS.

Tho' I have oft, on great occaſions, *Tullus*,
Beheld thee in the ſenate, and the field,
Cover'd with glory; yet, I muſt avow,
I never ſaw thee ſhew ſuch genuine greatneſs,
Such true ſublimity of ſoul, as now.
To ſcorn th' all-powerful charm of ſelfiſh paſſions,
Chiefly the dazzling pride of emulation,
That noble weakneſs of heroic minds,
To ſink thyſelf that thou may'ſt raiſe thy country;
To put the ſword into thy rival's hand,
And twine thy promis'd laurels round his brow——
O 'tis a flight beyond the higheſt point
Of martial glory! and what few can reach.
Go forth, ye choſen miniſters of juſtice;
And may that awful power, whoſe ſecret hand
Sways all our paſſions, turns our partial views
All to its own dread purpoſes, attend you!

CORIOLANUS.

I burn to enter on the glorious taſk
You now have mark'd me out. How ſlow the time
To the warm ſoul, that in the very inſtant
It forms, would execute, a great deſign.
'Tis my advice we march direct to *Rome*;
We cannot be too quick. Let the firſt dawn
See us in bright array before her walls.
Perhaps when they behold their exile there,
Back'd by your force, ſome conſcious hearts among them

May feel th' alarm of guilt.

TULLUS.

I much approve
Of this advice. 'Tis what I thought before,
Ere ſtrengthen'd, *Marcius*, by thy mighty arm:
But now 'tis doubly right. Here, *Volſcian* chiefs,
Here let our council terminate—The troops
Have had repoſe ſufficient. Strait to *Rome*,
Come, let us urge our march—As yet the ſtars
Ride in their middle watch; we ſhall, with eaſe,
Reach it by dawn.——

CORIOLANUS.

Yes, we have time—too much!
Six tedious hours till morn—But hence! away!
My ſoul on fire anticipates the dawn.

End of the Second Act.

ACT

ACT III. SCENE I.

CORIOLANUS, TULLUS, VOLUSIUS, TITUS, *with a crowd of* Volſcian *officers. Acclamations behind the ſcenes.*

CORIOLANUS.

NO more—I merit not this laviſh praiſe.
True, we have driven the *Roman* legions back,
Defeated, and diſgrac'd—But what is this?
Nothing, ye *Volſci*, nothing yet is done.
We but begin the wondrous leaf of ſtory,
That marks the *Roman* doom. At length it dawns,
The deſtin'd hour, that eaſes of their fears
The nations round, and ſets *Heſperia* free.
Come on, my brave companions of the war!
Come, let us finiſh at one mighty ſtroke
This toil of labouring fate—We will, or periſh!
While, noble *Tullus*, you protect the camp,
I, with my troops, all men of choſen valour,
And well-approv'd to-day, will ſtorm the city.

TITUS.

Beneath thy animating conduct, *Marcius*,

What

What can the *Volſcian* valour not perform?
Thy very ſight and voice ſubdues the *Romans*.
When, lifting up your helm, you ſhew'd your face,
That like a comet glar'd deſtruction on them,
I ſaw the braveſt veterans fly before thee.
Their ancient ſpirit has with thee forſook them,
And ruin hangs o'er yon devoted walls.

[*Enter an officer, who addreſſes himſelf to* Coriolanus.

OFFICER.

My lord, a herald is arriv'd from *Rome*,
To ſay, a deputation from the ſenate,
Attended by the miniſters of heaven,
A venerable train of prieſts and flamens,
Is on the way, addreſs'd to you.

CORIOLANUS.

To me!
What can this meſſage mean!—Stand to your arms,
Ye *Volſcian* troops; and let theſe *Romans* paſs
Betwixt the lowring frown of double files.
What! do they think me ſuch a milky boy,
To pay my vengeance with a few ſoft words.
Come, fellow ſoldiers, *Tullus*, come, and ſee,
If I betray the honours you have done me.

[*Goes out with a train of* Volſcian *officers.*

SCENE

SCENE II.

TULLUS, VOLUSIUS, *who remain.*

VOLUSIUS, *after ſome ſilence.*

Are we not, *Tullus*, failing in our duty
Not to attend our general?

TULLUS.

How! what ſaidſt thou?

VOLUSIUS.

Methought, my lord, his parting orders were,
We ſhould attend the triumph now preparing
O'er all his foes at once—*Romans* and *Volſci!*
Come, we ſhall give offence.

TULLUS.

Of this no more.
I pray thee ſpare thy bitter irony.

VOLUSIUS.

Shall I then ſpeak without diſguiſe?

TULLUS.

Speak out
With all the honeſt bluntneſs of a friend.
Think'ſt thou I fear the truth?

VOLUSIUS.

Then, *Tullus*, know,
Thou art no more the general of the *Volſci*.
Thou haſt, by this thy generous weakneſs, ſunk
Thyſelf into a private man of *Antium*.

Yes,

Yes, thou haſt taken from thy laurel'd brow
The well-earn'd trophies of thy toils and perils,
Thy ſpringing hopes, the faireſt ever budded,
And heap'd them on a man too proud before.

TULLUS.

He bears it high.

VOLUSIUS.

Death and perdition! high!
With uncontroul'd command!—You ſee, already,
He will not be encumber'd with the fetters
Of our advice. He ſpeaks his ſovereign will;
On every hand he iſſues out his orders,
As to his natural ſlaves.—For you, my lord,
He has, I think, confin'd you to your camp,
There in inglorious indolence to languiſh;
While he, beneath your blaſted eye, ſhall reap
The harveſt of your honour.

TULLUS.

No, *Voluſius*,
Whatever honour ſhall by him be gain'd
Reverts to me, from whoſe ſuperior bounty
He drew the means of all his glorious deeds.
This mighty chief, this conqueror of *Rome*,
Is but my creature.——

VOLUSIUS.

Wretched ſelf-deluſion;
He and the *Volſcians* know he is thy maſter.
He acts as ſuch in all things—Now, by *Mars*,
Could my abhorrent ſoul endure the thought

Of

Of ſtooping to a *Roman* chief, I here
Would leave thee in thy ſolitary camp,
And go where glory calls.

TULLUS.

Indeed, *Voluſius*,
I did expect more equal treatment from him.
But what of that?—The generous pride of virtue
Diſdains to weigh too nicely the returns
Her bounty meets with—Like the liberal gods,
From her own gracious nature ſhe beſtows,
Nor ſtoops to aſk reward—Yet muſt I own,
I thought he would not have ſo ſoon forgot
What he ſo lately was, and what I am.

VOLUSIUS.

Gods! knew ye not his character before?
Did you not know his genius was to yours
Averſe, as are antipathies in nature?
High, over-weening, tyrannouſly proud,
And only fit to hold command o'er ſlaves?
Hence, as repugnant to that equal life,
Which is the quickening ſoul of all republics,
The *Roman* people caſt him forth; and we,
Shall we receive the bane of their repoſe,
Into our breaſt? Are we leſs free than they?
Or ſhall we be more patient of a tyrant?

TULLUS.

All this I knew. But while his imperfections
Are thy glad theme, thou haſt forgot his virtues.

VOLU-

VOLUSIUS.

I leave that ſubject to the ſmooth *Galeſus*,
And theſe his *Volſcian* flatterers—His virtues!
Truſt me there is no inſolence that treads
So high as that which rears itſelf on virtue.

TULLUS.

Well, be it ſo—I meant, that even his vices
Should, on this great occaſion, ſerve the *Volſci*.

VOLUSIUS.

Confuſion! there it is! there lurks the ſting
Of our diſhonour! while this *Marcius* leads
The *Roman* armies, ours are driven before him.
Behold, he changes ſides; when with him changes
The fortune of the war. Strait they grow *Volſci*
And we victorious *Romans*—Such, no doubt,
Such is his ſecret boaſt—Ay, this vile brand
Succeſs itſelf will fix for ever on us;
And, *Tullus*, thou, 'tis thou muſt anſwer for it.

TULLUS, *aſide.*

His words are daggers to my heart; I feel
Their truth, but am aſham'd to own my folly.

VOLUSIUS.

O ſhame! O infamy! the thought conſumes me,
It ſcalds my eyes with tears, to ſee a *Roman*
Borne on our ſhoulders to immortal fame:
Juſt in the happy moment that decided
The long diſpute of ages, that for which
Our generous anceſtors had toil'd and bled,
To ſee him then ſtep in and ſteal our glory!

O that we firſt had periſhed all! A people,
Who cannot find in their own proper force
Their own protection, are not worth the ſaving!

TULLUS.

It muſt have way! I will no more ſuppreſs it——
Know, then, my rough old friend, no leſs than thee
His conduct hurts me and upbraids my folly.
I wake as from a dream. What demon mov'd me?
What doating generoſity? his woes,
Was it his woes! to ſee the brave reduc'd
To truſt his mortal foe? perhaps, a little
That work'd within my boſom—But, *Volusius*,
That was not all—I will to thee confeſs
The weakneſs of my heart—Yes, it was pride,
The dazzling pride to ſee my rival warriour
The great *Coriolanus*, bend his ſoul,
His haughty ſou, to ſue for my protection.
Protection, ſaid I? were it that alone,
I had been baſe to have refus'd him that,
To have refus'd him aught a gallant foe
Owes to a gallant foe.—But to exalt him
To the ſame level, nay above myſelf;
To yield him the command of half my troops,
The choiceſt acting half—That, that was madneſs!
Was weak, was mean, unworthy of a man!——

VOLUSIUS.

I ſcorn to flatter thee—It was indeed.

TULLUS.

Curſe on the ſlave *Gallesus!* ſoothing, he

Seiz'd

Seiz'd the fond moment of infatuation,
And clinch'd the chains my generous folly forg'd.
How ſhall I from this labyrinth eſcape?
Muſt it then be! what cruel genius dooms me,
In war or peace to creep beneath his fortune?

VOLUSIUS.

That genius is thyſelf. If thou canſt bear
The very thought of ſtooping to this *Roman*,
Thou from that moment art his vaſſal, *Tullus*;
By that thou doſt acknowledge, parent nature
Has formed him thy ſuperior. But if fix'd
Upon the baſe of manly reſolution,
Thou ſay'ſt—I will be free! I will command!
I and my country! then—O never doubt it—
We ſhall find means to cruſh this vain intruder;
Even I my ſelf—this hand——

Nay, hear me, *Tullus*,
'Tis not yet come to that, that laſt reſource.
I do not ſay we ſhould employ the dagger,
While other, better means are in our power.

TULLUS.

No, my *Voluſius*, fortune will not drive us;
Or I am much deceiv'd, to that extreme:
We ſhall not want the ſtrongeſt faireſt plea,
To give a ſolemn ſanction to his fate.
He will betray himſelf. Whate'er his rage
Of paſſion talks, a weakneſs for his country
Sticks in his ſoul, and he is ſtill a *Roman*.
Soon ſhall we ſee him tempted to the brink

Of this ſure precipice—Then down, at once,
Without remorſe, we hurl him to perdition!
But hark! the trumpet calls us to a ſcene
I ſhould deteſt, if not from hope we thence
May gather matter to mature our purpoſe.

SCENE III.

The back ſcene opens, and diſcovers Coriolanus *ſitting on his tribunal, attended by his lictors, and a croud of* Volſcian *officers. Files of troops drawn up on either hand. In the depth of the ſcene appear the deputies from the* Roman *ſenate,* M. Minucius, Poſthumus Cominius, Sp. Lartius, P. Pinnarius, *and* Q. Sulpitius, *all conſular ſenators, who had been his moſt zealous friends. And behind them march the prieſts, the ſacrificers, the augurs, and the guardians of the ſacred things, dreſt in their ceremonial habits. Theſe advance ſlowly, betwixt the files of ſoldiers, under arms. As* Tullus *enters* Coriolanus *riſing ſalutes him.*

CORIOLANUS.

Here, noble *Tullus*, ſit, and judge my conduct;
Nor ſpare to check me, if I act amiſs.

TULLUS.

TULLUS.

Marcius, the *Volſcian* fate is in thy hands.

[Coriolanus *is ſeated again, and* Tullus *places himſelf upon a tribunal on his left hand. Mean time the* Roman *deputies advance up to* Coriolanus, *and ſalute him, which he returns.*

CORIOLANUS.

What, *Romans*, from the generals of the *Volſci*
Is your demand?

MINUCIUS.

O *Coriolanus*, *Rome*,
Nurſe of thy tender years, thy parent-city,
Her ſenators, her people, prieſts, and augurs,
Her every order and degree, by us,
Thy ever-zealous, ſtill unſhaken friends,
Sue in the moſt pathetic terms for peace.
And if in this conſtrain'd, we from our maxim,
Never to aſk but give it, muſt depart;
It is ſome conſolation, in the ſtate
To which thou haſt by thy ſuperior valour
Reduc'd us, that we aſk it from a *Roman*.

CORIOLANUS.

I was a *Roman* once, and thought the name
Was not diſhonour'd by me; but it pleas'd
Your lords, the mob of *Rome*, to take it from me;
Nor will I now receive it back again.

MINUCIUS.

The name thou may'ſt reject, but canſt not throw
The duties from thee which that name imports;

Indiſſoluble duties, bound upon thee
By the ſtrong hand of nature, and confirm'd
By the dread ſanction of all-ruling *Jove*.
Then hear thy country's ſupplicating voice;
By all thoſe duties I conjure thee hear us.

CORIOLANUS.

Well—I will hear thee; ſpeak, declare thy meſſage.

MINUCIUS.

Give peace, give healing peace, to two brave nations,
Fatigu'd with war, and ſick of cruel deeds!
To carry on deſtruction's eaſy trade,
Afflict mankind, and ſcourge the world with war,
Is what each wicked, each ambitious man,
Who lets his furious paſſions looſe, may do:
But in the flattering torrent of ſucceſs,
To check his rage, and drop the avenging ſword,
When a repenting people aſk it of him,
This is the genuine bounty of a god.
Then urge no farther this your juſt reſentment;
Which, injur'd as you are, you needs muſt feel,
But never ought to carry into action,
Againſt your ſacred country; whence you drew
Your life, your virtues, every mortal good,
That very valour you employ againſt her.
Stop, *Coriolanus*, ere, beyond retreat,
You plunge yourſelf in crimes. To the fierce joy
Of vengeance puſh'd to barbarous exceſs,
Repentance will ſucceed, and ſickning horror.
Conſider too the ſlippery ſtate of fortune.

The gods take pleaſure oft, when haughty mortals
On their own pride erect a mighty fabric,
By ſlighteſt means, to lay their towering ſchemes
Low in the duſt, and teach them they are nothing.
Return, thou virtuous *Roman!* to the boſom
Of thy imploring country. Lo! her arms
She fondly ſpreads to take thee back again,
And by redoubled love efface her harſhneſs.
Return, and crown thee with the nobleſt wreathe
Which glory can beſtow—the palm of mercy!

CORIOLANUS.

Marcus Minucius, and ye other *Romans*,
Reſpected ſenators, and holy flamens,
Attend, and take to your demand this anſwer:
Why court you me, the ſervant of the *Volſci?*
It is to them that you muſt bend for peace,
Which on theſe only terms they will accord you.
" Reſtore the conquer'd lands, your former wars
" Have raviſh'd from them: from their towns and cities,
" Won by your arms, withdraw your colonies;
" And to the full immunities of *Rome*
" Frankly admit them, as you have the *Latines*."
Then, *Romans*, you have peace, and not till then!
If theſe are terms which ſuit not your ambition,
They ſuit the ſtate to which the *Volſcian* arms
Have now reduc'd you—We have learn'd from *Rome*
To uſe our fortune, and command the vanquiſh'd.

TULLUS, *aſide*.

Death to my hopes! I'm now his ſlave for ever.

CORIOLANUS, *addreſſing himſelf to the* Volſci.

This, my illuſtrious patrons and protectors,
Volſci, to you I ow'd. Permit me now
To do myſelf and injur'd honour juſtice.

[*Turning again to the* Romans.

As to the liberty you idly vaunt
To give me of returning to your city,
'Tis what I hold unworthy of acceptance.
Can I return into th' ungrateful boſom
Of a diſtracted ſtate, where, to the rage
Of a vile ſenſeleſs populace, the laws
Are by your ſhameful weakneſs given a prey?
Who are the men that hold the ſway among you?
And whom have you expell'd, as even unworthy
To live within the cincture of your walls!—
O the wild thought breaks in and troubles reaſon!—
With what, ye *Romans*, can the ſowereſt cenſor,
The moſt envenom'd malice juſtly charge me?
Did I e'er break your laws? Nay, did I e'er
Do aught that could diſturb the ſacred order,
The peace and ſocial harmony of life;
Or taint your ancient ſanctity of manners?
What was my crime? I could not bear to ſee
Your dignity debas'd, to ſee the rabble
Tread on the reverend grey authority
Of ſenatorial wiſdom: Yes, for you,
In your defence I did enrage this monſter;
And yet you baſely left me to its fury.
Then talk no more of ſervices and friendſhip:

A friend,

A friend, who can, and does not ſhield, betrays me.
Or if the power was wanting, then your ſenate
Is ſunk into ſervility and bondage,
Nor ſhould a freeman deign to ſit among you.

MINUCIUS.

The wiſeſt are ſometimes compell'd to yield
To popular ſtorms: yet I defend not, *Marcius*,
Our timid conduct; we have felt our error,
And now invite thee back to aid the ſenate,
With thy heroic ſpirit to reſtrain
The giddy rage of faction, and to hold
The reigns of government more firm hereafter.
As to th' appeal which thou haſt nobly made
In vindication of thy ſpotleſs fame,
With pleaſure we confirm it, and bear witneſs
To all thy public and thy private virtues:
But let us alſo beg thee not to ſtain
The brightneſs of that glory by a crime,
Which, unrepented, would diſgrace them all,
A dire rebellious war againſt thy country.

CORIOLANUS.

Abſurd! What can you mean? To call a people,
Who with the laſt indignity have us'd me,
To call my foes my country! No, *Minucius*,
It is the generous nation of the *Volſci*,
Theſe brave, theſe virtuous men, yourſee around me,
Who, when I wander'd a poor helpleſs exile,
Took pity of my injuries and woes;
Forgot the former miſchiefs of my ſword;

Heap'd on me kindneſs, honours, dignities,
Fea'rd not to truſt me with this high command,
And plac'd me here the guardian of their cauſe!——
Be witneſs, *Jove!*—It is alone their nation
I henceforth will acknowledge for my country!
Let this ſuffice, you have my anſwer, *Romans.*

COMINIUS.

This anſwer, *Coriolanus*, is the dictate
More of thy pride than magnanimity:
'Tis thy revenge that gives it, not thy virtue.
Art thou above the gods? who joy to ſhow'r
Their doubled goodneſs on repenting mortals?
But think not I intend, by this, to urge
Our profer'd peace, ſo harſhly treated, further.
That were a weakneſs ill becoming *Romans.*
Yet I muſt tell thee, it would better ſuit
A fierce deſpotic chief of barbarous ſlaves,
Than the calm dignity of one who ſits
In the grave ſenate of a free republic,
To talk ſo high, and as it were to thruſt
Plebeians from the native rights of man.—

CORIOLANUS.

Ha! doſt thou come the people's advocate
To me, *Cominius!* com'ſt thou to inſult me!

COMINIUS.

Nay, hear me, *Marcius.*—Theſe grey hairs impower me
To ſet thee right before this great aſſembly;
And there was once a time, thou wouldſt have heard

Thy

Thy general with more deference and patience.—
I tell thee then, whoe'er amidſt the ſons
Of reaſon, valour, liberty, and virtue,
Diſplays diſtinguiſh'd merit, is a noble
Of nature's own creating. Such have riſen,
Sprung from the duſt; or where had been our honours?
And ſuch in radiant bands will riſe again,
In yon immortal city, that, when moſt
Depreſt by fate, and near apparent ruin,
Returns, as with an energy divine,
On her aſtoniſh'd foes and ſhakes them from her.—
Your pardon, *Volſci*—But this, *Coriolanus*,
Is what I had to ſay.

CORIOLANUS.

And I have heard it—

[*Riſing from his tribunal; and the prieſts advancing to addreſs him, he prevents them.*

For you ye awful miniſters of heaven,
Let me not hear your holy lips profan'd
By urging what my duty muſt refuſe.
I bow in adoration to the gods;
I venerate their ſervants. But there is,
There is a power, their chief, their darling care,
The guardian of mankind, which to betray
Were violating all—And that is juſtice.
So far my public character demands;
So far my honour.—Now, what ſhould forbid
The man, and friend, to be indulg'd a little?

Permit me to embrace thee, good *Minucius*,
Thee, *Lartius*; you, *Pinnarius* and *Sulpitius*:
But chiefly thee, *Cominius*, who firſt rais'd me
To deeds of arms; who from thy conſular brow
Took thy own crown, and with it circled mine.
Tho' nought can ſhake my purpoſe, yet I wiſh
That *Rome* had ſent me others on this errand.
I thank you for your friendſhip. The protection,
Which you have given to thoſe, whom once I call'd
By tender names, I would not now remember.
How ſhall I—ſay—return your generous goodneſs?
O there is nothing you, as friends, can aſk,
My grateful heart will not with pleaſure grant you.

COMINIUS.

We thank thee, *Coriolanus*—But a *Roman*
Diſdains that favour you refuſe his country.

CORIOLANUS.

[*To the* Volſcian *officers.*

See that they be, with due regard and ſafety,
Conducted back.

[*To the* Roman *ſenators.*

I will ſuſpend th' aſſault,
Till to theſe terms, of which we will not bate
The ſmalleſt part, your ſenate may have time
To ſend their lateſt anſwer. Then we cut
All further treaty off. *Romans*, farewel.

End of the Third Act.

ACT

ACT IV. SCENE I.

TULLUS, *alone.*

WHAT is the mind of man? A reſtleſs ſcene
Of vanity and weakneſs; ſhifting ſtill,
As ſhift the lights of our uncertain knowledge;
Or as the various gale of paſſion breathes.
None ever thought himſelf more deeply founded
On what is right, nor felt a nobler ardor,
Than I, when I inveſted *Caius Marcius*
With this ill-judg'd command. Now it appears
Diſtraction, folly, monſtrous folly! meanneſs!
And down I plunge, betray'd even by my virtue,
From gulph to gulph, from ſhame to deeper ſhame.

SCENE II.

TULLUS, GALESUS.

GALESUS.

I liſten'd, *Tullus*, to th' important ſcene
That lately paſs'd before us, with moſt ſtrict

Unpre-

Unprejudic'd attention; and have ſince
Revolv'd it in my mind, both as a man,
Ally'd to all mankind, and as a *Volſcian*.
Indeed our terms are high, and by the manner
In which they were preſcrib'd by *Coriolanus*,
Are what we cannot hope will e'er be granted.
They ſhould be ſoften'd. Let us yield a little,
Conſcious ourſelves to a great nation's pride,
The pride of human nature. Could the *Romans*
Stoop to ſuch peace, commanded by the ſword,
They then were ſlaves, unworthy our alliance.

TULLUS.

Gods! do I hear in thee, one of the chiefs
Intruſted with the honour of the *Volſci*,
An advocate for *Rome*?

GALESUS.

I glory, *Tullus*,
To own myſelf an advocate for peace.
Peace is the happy natural ſtate of man;
War his corruption, his diſgrace—

TULLUS.

His ſafeguard!
His pride! his glory!—What but war, juſt war,
Gave *Greece* her heroes? Thoſe who drew the ſword
(As we do now) againſt the ſons of rapine;
To quell proud tyrants, and to free mankind.

GALESUS.

Yes, *Tullus*, when to juſt defence the warrior
Confines his force, he is a worſhip'd name;

Dear

Dear to mankind, the firſt and beſt of mortals!
Yet ſtill, if this can by ſoft means be done,
And fair accommodation, that is better.
Why ſhould we purchaſe with the blood of thouſands,
What may be gain'd by mutual juſt conceſſion?
Why give up peace, the beſt of human bleſſings,
For the vain cruel pride of uſeleſs conqueſt?

TULLUS.

Theſe ſoothing dreams of philoſophic quiet
Are only fit for unfrequented ſhades.
The ſage ſhould quit the buſy buſtling world,
Ill ſuited to his gentle meditations,
And in ſome deſart find that peace he loves.

GALESUS.

Miſtaken man! Philoſophy conſiſts not
In airy ſchemes, or idle ſpeculations:
The rule and conduct of all ſocial life
Is her great province. Not in lonely cells
Obſcure ſhe lurks, but holds her heavenly light
To ſenates and to kings, to guide their councils,
And teach them to reform and bleſs mankind.
All policy but her's is falſe, and rotten;
All valour not conducted by her precepts
Is a deſtroying fury ſent from hell
To plague unhappy man, and ruin nations.

TULLUS.

To ſtop the waſte of that deſtroying fury
Is the great cauſe and purpoſe of this war.
Art thou a friend to peace?—ſubdue the *Romans*.

Who,

Who, who, but they, have turn'd this ancient land,
Where, from *Saturnian* times, harmonious concord
Still lov'd to dwell, into a ſcene of blood,
Of endleſs diſcord, and perpetual rapine?
The ſword, the vengeful ſword, muſt drain away
This boiling blood, that thus diſturbs the nations!
Talk not of terms. It is a vain attempt
To bind th' ambitious and unjuſt by treaties:
Theſe they elude a thouſand ſpecious ways;
Or if they cannot find a fair pretext,
They bluſh not in the face of heaven to break them.

GALESUS.

Why then affronted heaven will combat for us.
Set juſtice on our ſide, and then my voice
Shall be as loud for war as thine; my ſword
Shall ſtrike as deep; at leaſt my blood ſhall flow
As freely, *Tullus*, in my country's cauſe,
But as I then would die to ſerve the *Volſcians*,
So now I dare to ſerve them by oppoſing,
Even with my ſingle voice, th' impetuous torrent
That hurries us away beyond the bounds
Of temperate wiſdom; and preſume to tell thee,
It is thy paſſion, not thy prudence dictates
This haughty language.

TULLUS.

Yes, it is my paſſion,
A paſſion for the glory of my country,
That ſcorns your narrow views of timid prudence.
Our injur'd honour drew our ſwords, and never

Shall

Shall they be ſheath'd while I command the *Volſcians*,
Till *Rome* ſubmit to *Antium*.——

GALESUS.

Rome will periſh
Ere ſhe ſubmit; and ſhe has ſtill her walls,
The ſtrength of her allies, her native valour,
Which oft has ſav'd her in the worſt extremes,
And, ſtronger yet than all, deſpair, to aid her.

TULLUS.

All theſe will nought avail her, if our fears
Come not to her aſſiſtance—But, *Galeſus*,
Why urge you this to me? Go, talk to *Marcius*.
The war has given him all his pride could hope for,
To ſee *Rome*'s ſenate humbled at his feet:
He now may wiſh to reign in peace at *Antium*,
And thou, perhaps, art come an envoy from him,
To learn if I ſhall prove a quiet ſubject.

GALESUS.

Thro' this unguarded opening of thy ſoul,
I ſee what ſtings thee—Ah! beware of envy!
If that pale fury ſeize thee, thou art loſt!
Tullus, 'tis eaſier far, from the clear breaſt,
To keep out treacherous vice, than to expel it.
Farewel. Remember I have done my duty.

[*Goes out.*

TULLUS, *alone.*

This man diſcerns my heart—Well: What of that?
Am I afraid its movements ſhould be ſeen?
I, whoſe clear thoughts have never ſhunn'd the light,

Muſt

Muſt I now ſeek to hide them? O misfortune!
To have reduc'd myſelf to ſuch a ſtate,
So much beneath the greatneſs of my ſoul,
That, like a coward, I muſt learn to practiſe
The wretched arts of vile diſſimulation!
By heaven I will not do't—I will not ſtoop
To veil my diſcontent a moment longer.
But ſee! my rival comes, the happy *Marcius*.
His haughty mien, his very looks, affront me.

SCENE III.

CORIOLANUS, TULLUS.

CORIOLANUS.

Tullus, I have receiv'd intelligence,
That a ſtrong body of the *Latin* troops
Is in full march to raiſe the ſiege of *Rome*.
Another day will bring them to its aid.
But go thou forth, and lead the valiant bands,
By thee commanded, to repel theſe ſuccours.
Go, and cut off from *Rome* its laſt reſource.

TULLUS.

I lead my troops, from the great ſcene of action,
From falling *Rome*, which, ere to-morrow's ſun
Shall ſet, may be our prey! ſure you forget
My rank and ſtation—I diſdain the ſervice:
Give it to ſome you may command. For me,

I now

I own no maſter but the *Volſcian* ſtates.
Rome is my object. I from *Antium* brought
The nobleſt army ever ſhook her walls.
And ſhall I now, on that deciſive day,
Doom'd by the gods to lay her pride in aſhes,
Shall I be abſent from that glorious work?
It is the higheſt outrage even to think it.—
Juſt gods! doſt thou preſume to give thy orders
To me? to me! thy equal in command?
Nay, thy ſuperior? was it not my hand,
My laviſh hand, beſtow'd thy power upon thee?
And know, proud *Roman*, that the man who gave it,
Can at his will reſume it.

CORIOLANUS.

I propos'd
This expedition to thee as thy friend,
Not as thy general, *Tullus*. We are both
Commanders here; and for my ſhare of power,
Whene'er the council of the *Volſcian* ſtates,
Who cloath'd me with it, ſhall again demand it,
I at their feet will lay it down, perſuaded,
The canker'd tongue of envy's ſelf muſt own,
That by my ſervice I have well deſerv'd it.

TULLUS.

Was it to them, or me, you hither came
To crave protection? Was not then your fortune,
Your liberty, your life, at my diſpoſal?
I rais'd you from the duſt, a wretched exile,
An outcaſt, helpleſs, friendleſs, driven to beg,

The loweſt refuge which deſpair can ſeek,
Shelter amidſt thy foes. My pitying goodneſs
Protected, truſted, and believ'd you grateful.
O ill-plac'd confidence!——

CORIOLANUS.

Immortal gods!
Hear I theſe words from *Tullus*?

TULLUS.

What for all this
Is thy return? Pride; ſelf-ſufficiency;
Councils apart from mine; deſpotic orders;
The glory of the war all pilfer'd from me:
And, to complete the whole, a *Latin* army
Now conjur'd up to draw me from the ſiege;
Till by cajoling our tame chiefs, and dazzling
The ſenſeleſs eyes of the low mob of ſoldiers,
Thou ſhalt be ſolely ſeated in the power
Which, thank my folly! now is ſhar'd betwixt us.

CORIOLANUS.

O indignation!—Down, thou ſwelling heart—
I will be calm—I will.—Thou doſt accuſe me
Of the worſt vice that can debaſe mankind,
Of black ingratitude. On what foundations?
What have I done to merit ſuch a charge?
Is it my fault, if in the *Volſcian* army
My name is as rever'd and great as thine?
Can I forbid authority, and fame,
To follow merit and ſucceſs? You knew
The man whom you employ'd, and ſhould have known

He

He would not be a cypher in employment.

TULLUS.

Think'ſt thou my heart can better brook than thine
To be that cypher! that diſhonour'd tool!
Subſervient to th' ambition of another?
Gods! I had rather live a drudging peaſant,
Unknown to glory, in ſome *Alpin* village;
Than at the head of theſe victorious legions,
Bear the high name of chief, without the power.
No, *Marcius*, no. I will command indeed:
And thou ſhalt learn, with all the *Volſcian* army,
To treat their general with reſpect.

CORIOLANUS.

Reſpect!
O *Tullus! Tullus!* by the powers divine!
I bore thee once reſpect, as high as man
Can ſhew to man. From thee, my foe, my rival,
I nor diſdain'd nor fear'd to aſk protection.
You gave me all I aſk'd, you gave me more,
With noble warmth of heart! which to eſteem,
Added the ties of gratitude, and friendſhip.
Whatever ſince, in council, or in arms,
Has been by me atchiev'd, was done for thee.
My glory all was thine. The palms I gain'd
Only compos'd a garland for his brow,
Who rais'd this baniſh'd man to tread on *Rome*.

TULLUS.

To tread on him who rais'd him—That, I know,
Is thy ambitious purpoſe; but be certain,

However

However *Rome* may bend beneath thy fortune,
Thou ſhalt not find an eaſy conqueſt here.

CORIOLANUS.

May *Jove* with lightning ſtrike me to the centre,
If from the day I ſaw thy face at *Antium*,
My heart has ever form'd one ſecret thought
To hurt thy honour, or depreſs thy greatneſs:
I was thy friend, thy ſoldier, and thy ſervant.
But now I will as openly avow,
Thy jealouſy has, with envenom'd breath,
Made ſuch a ſudden ravage in our friendſhip,
I know not what to think.——

TULLUS.

Think me thy foe.
There is no laſting friendſhip with the proud.

CORIOLANUS.

Nor with the jealous——But of this enough.
Come, let us turn our fire a nobler way:
We have a worthier quarrel to purſue,——
It were unjuſt, diſhonourable, baſe,
Our pride ſhould hurt the *Volſcian* cauſe.

TULLUS.

No, *Marcius*,
I mean to guard it better for the future:
The *Volſcian* cauſe is ſafeſt with a *Volſcian*.
I therefore claim, inſiſt upon my right;
That you ſhall yield me my command in turn.
The firſt attack was yours: 'Tis ſcanty juſtice,
The ſecond ſhould be mine.

CORI-

CORIOLANUS.

Tullus, 'tis yours.
O it imports not which of us command!
Give me the loweſt rank among your troops;
All *Italy* will know, the voice of fame
Will tell all future times, that I was preſent;
That *Coriolanus* in the *Volſcian* army
Aſſiſted, when imperial *Rome* was ſack'd;
That city which, while he maintain'd her cauſe,
Invincible herſelf, made *Antium* tremble.

TULLUS.

What arrogant preſumption!

SCENE IV.

To them VOLUSIUS, *entering haſtily.*

TULLUS.

Ha! *Voluſius*,
Thy looks declare ſome meſſage of importance.

VOLUSIUS.

Tullus, they do—I was to find thee, *Marcius*.
To thee a ſecond deputation comes,
Thy mother, and thy wife, with a long train
Of all the nobleſt ladies *Rome* can boaſt,
In mourning habits clad, approach our camp,
Preceded by a herald, to demand
Another audience of thee.

CORIO-

CORIOLANUS.

How, *Voluſius!*
Said you the *Roman* ladies! Low, indeed,
Muſt be the ſtate of Rome, when thus her matrons
She ſends amidſt the tumults of a camp,
To beg protection for the men, who lie
Trembling behind the ramparts—come! once more!
And ſee me put an end to prayers and treaty!

SCENE V.

TULLUS, VOLUSIUS.

VOLUSIUS.

Tullus, 'tis well. This anſwers to my wiſhes.

TULLUS.

How? What is well? That humbled *Rome* once more
Shall deck him with the trophies of our arms?

VOLUSIUS.

And hop'ſt thou nothing from this bleſt event?
They who have often blaſted mighty heroes,
Who oft have ſtoln into the firmeſt hearts,
And melted them to folly; they, my friend,
Will do what wiſdom never could effect.

TULLUS.

Think'ſt thou the prayers and tears of wailing women
Can ſhake the man, who with ſuch cold diſdain

Stood:

Stood firm againſt thoſe venerable conſuls,
And ſpurn'd the genius of his kneeling country?

VOLUSIUS.

It was his pride alone that made him ours.
That paſſion kept him firm; the flattering charm
Of humbling thoſe, who in their perſons bore
The whole collected majeſty of *Rome*.
Theſe women are no proper objects for it:
He cannot triumph o'er his wife and mother.
On this my hopes are founded, that theſe women
May by by their gentler influence ſubdue him.

TULLUS.

Whate'er th' event, he ſhall no longer here,
As wave his paſſions, dictate peace or war.
Whether his ſtubborn ſoul maintains its firmneſs,
Or yields to female prayers, the *Volſcian* honour
Will be alike betray'd. If *Rome* prevails,
He ſtops our conquering arms from her deſtruction;
If he rejects her ſuit, he reigns our tyrant.
But, by th' immortal gods! his ſhort-liv'd empire
Shall never ſee yon radiant ſun deſcend.

VOLUSIUS.

Bleſt be thoſe gods that have at laſt inſpir'd thee
With reſolution equal to thy cauſe,
The cauſe of liberty!——

TULLUS.

Be ſure, *Voluſius*,
If that ſhould happen which thy hopes portend;

Should he, by nature tam'd, diſarm'd by love,
Reſpite the *Roman* doom—He ſeals his own:
By heaven! he dies.

VOLUSIUS.

Let me embrace thee, *Tullus!*
Now breaking from the cloud, which, like the ſun,
Thy own too bounteous beams had drawn around thee.

TULLUS.

You was deceiv'd, my friend. When I with tameneſs,
With tameneſs which aſtoniſh'd thy brave ſpirit,
Seem'd to ſubmit to that unequal ſway
He arrogated o'er me; know, my heart
Ne'er ſwell'd ſo high as in that cruel moment.
My indignation, like th' impriſon'd fire
Pent in the troubled breaſt of glowing *Ætna*,
Burnt deep and ſilent: But, collected now,
It ſhall beneath its fury bury *Marcius!*
'Tis fixt. Our tyrant dies.

VOLUSIUS.

Tullus, my ſword
Here claims to be employ'd.—Nor mine alone—
There are ſome worthy *Volſci* ſtill remaining,
Who think with us, and pine beneath the laurels
A *Roman* chief beſtows.

TULLUS.

Go, find them ſtrait,
And bring them to the ſpace before his tent;
'Tis there he will receive this deputation.

Then

Then if he ſinks beneath theſe womens prayers—
Or if he does not—But, *Voluſius*, wait,
I give thee ſtricteſt charge to wait my ſignal.
Perhaps I may find means to free the *Volſci*
Without his blood. If not—We will be free.

End of the Fourth Act.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Trumpets ſounding.

The ſcene diſcovers the camp, a croud of Volſcian *officers with files of ſoldiers, drawn up as before. Enter* Coriolanus, Tullus, Galeſus, Voluſius. *The* Roman *ladies advance ſlowly from the depth of the ſtage, with* Veturia, *the mother of* Coriolanus, *and* Volumnia *his wife at their head, all clad in habits of mourning.* Coriolanus *ſtands at the head of the* Volſci, *ſurrounded by his lictors; but, when he perceives his mother and wife, after ſome ſtruggle, he advances, and goes haſtily to embrace them.*

CORIOLANUS *advancing.*

LOwer your faſces, lictors——Oh *Veturia!*
Thou beſt of parents!

VETURIA.

Coriolanus, ſtop.
Whom am I to embrace? A ſon, or foe?

Say,

Say, in what light am I regarded here?
Thy mother, or thy captive?

CORIOLANUS,

Juſtly, madam,
You check my fondneſs, that, by nature hurry'd,
Forgot I was the general of the *Volſci*,
And you a deputy from hoſtile *Rome*.

[*He goes back to his former ſtation.*

I hear you with reſpect. Speak your commiſſion.

VETURIA.

Think not I come a deputy from *Rome*.
Rome, once rejected, ſcorns a ſecond ſuit.
You have already heard whate'er the tongue
Of eloquence can plead, whate'er the wiſdom
Of ſacred age, the dignity of ſenates,
And virtue, can enforce. Behold me here,
Sent by the ſhades of your immortal fathers,
Sent by the genius of the *Marcian* line,
Commiſſion'd by my own maternal heart,
To try the ſoft, yet ſtronger powers of nature.
Thus authoriz'd, I aſk, nay, claim a peace,
On equal, fair, and honourable terms,
To thee, to *Rome*, and to the *Volſcian* people.
Grant it, my ſon! Thy mother begs it of thee,
Thy wife, the beſt, the kindeſt of her ſex,
And theſe illuſtrious matrons, who have ſooth'd
The gloomy hours thou haſt been abſent from us.
We, by whate'er is great and good in nature,
By every duty, by the gods, conjure thee!

To grant us peace, and turn on other foes
Thy arms, where thou may'ſt purchaſe virtuous glory.

CORIOLANUS.

I ſhould, *Veturia*, break thoſe holy bonds
That hold the wide republic of mankind,
Society, together; I ſhould grow
A wretch, unworthy to be call'd thy ſon;
I ſhould, with my *Volumnia*'s fair eſteem,
Forfeit her love; theſe matrons would deſpiſe me—
Could I betray the *Volſcian* cauſe, thus truſted,
Thus recommended to me—No, my mother,
You cannot ſure, you cannot aſk it of me!

VETURIA.

And does my ſon ſo little know me? me?
Who took ſuch care to form his tender years,
Left to my conduct by his dying father?
Have I ſo ill deſerv'd that truſt? alas!
Am I ſo low in thy eſteem, that thou
Should'ſt e'er imagine I could urge a part
Which in the leaſt might ſtain the *Marcian* honour?
No, let me periſh rather! periſh all!
Life has no charms compar'd with ſpotleſs glory!
I only aſk, thou would'ſt forbid thy troops
To waſte our lands, and to aſſault yon city,
Till time be given for mild and righteous meaſures.
Grant us but one year's truce: mean while thou may'ſt
With honour and advantage to both nations,
Betwixt us mediate a perpetual peace.

CORIO-

CORIOLANUS.

Alas! my mother! That were granting all.

VETURIA.

Canſt thou refuſe me ſuch a juſt petition,
The firſt requeſt thy mother ever made thee?
Canſt thou to her intreaties, prayers, and tears,
Prefer a ſavage obſtinate revenge?
Have love and nature loſt all power within thee?

CORIOLANUS.

No,—in my heart they reign as ſtrong as ever.
Come, I conjure you, quit ungrateful *Rome*,
Come, and complete my happineſs at *Antium*,
You, and my dear *Volumnia*—There, *Veturia*,
There ſhall you ſee with what reſpect the *Volſci*
Will treat the wife and mother of their general.

VETURIA.

Treat me thyſelf with more reſpect, my ſon;
Nor dare to ſhock my ears with ſuch propoſals.
Shall I deſert my country, I who come
To plead her cauſe? Ah no!—A grave in *Rome*
Would better pleaſe me, than a throne at *Antium*.
How haſt thou thus forſaken all my precepts?
How haſt thou thus forgot thy love to *Rome*?
O *Coriolanus*, when with hoſtile arms,
With fire and ſword, you enter'd on our borders,
Did not the foſtering air, that breathes around us,
Allay thy guilty fury, and inſtil
A certain native ſweetneſs thro' thy ſoul?
Did not your heart thus murmur to itſelf?

" Theſe walls contain whatever can command
" Reſpect from virtue, or is dear to nature,
" The monuments of piety and valour,
" The ſculptur'd forms, the trophies of my fathers,
" My houſhold gods, my mother, wife and children!

CORIOLANUS.

Ah! you ſeduce me with too tender views!—
Theſe walls contain the moſt corrupt of men,
A baſe ſeditious herd; who trample order,
Diſtinction, juſtice, laws, beneath their feet,
Inſolent foes to worth, the foes of virtue!

VETURIA.

Thou haſt not thence a right to lift thy hand
Againſt the whole community, which forms
Thy ever-ſacred country.—That conſiſts
Not of coeval citizens alone:
It knows no bounds; it has a retroſpect
To ages paſt; it looks on thoſe to come;
And graſps of all the general worth and virtue.
Suppoſe, my ſon, that I to thee had been
A harſh obdurate parent, even unjuſt: [thee,
How would the monſtrous thought with horror ſtrike
Of plunging, from revenge, thy raging ſteel
Into her breaſt, who nurs'd thy infant years!—

CORIOLANUS.

Rome is no more! that *Rome* which nurs'd my youth;
That *Rome*, conducted by *Patrician* virtue,
She is no more! My ſword ſhall now chaſtiſe
Theſe ſons of pride and dirt! Her upſtart tyrants!

Who

Who have debas'd the nobleſt ſtate on earth
Into a ſordid democratic faction.
Why will my mother join her cauſe to theirs?

VETURIA.

Forbid it, *Jove!* that I ſhould e'er diſtinguiſh
My intereſt from the general cauſe of *Rome*;
Or live to ſee a foreign hoſtile arm
Reform th' abuſes of our land of freedom.
[*Pauſing.*
But 'tis in vain, I find, to reaſon more.
Is there no way to reach thy filial heart,
Once fam'd as much for piety as courage?
Oft haſt thou juſtly triumph'd, *Coriolanus*;
Now yield one triumph to thy widow'd mother;
And ſend me back amidſt the loud acclaims,
The grateful tranſports of deliver'd *Rome*,
The happieſt far, the moſt renown'd of women!

CORIOLANUS.

Why, why, *Veturia*, wilt thou plead in vain?

[TULLUS, *Aſide to* VOLUSIUS.

See, ſee, *Voluſius*, how the ſtrong emotions
Of powerful nature ſhake his inmoſt ſoul!
See how they tear him.—If he long reſiſts them,
He is a god, or ſomething worſe than man.

VETURIA.

O *Marcius*, *Marcius!* canſt thou treat me thus?
Canſt thou complain of *Rome*'s ingratitude,
Yet be to me ſo cruelly ungrateful?
To me! who anxious rear'd thy youth to glory?

Whoſe only joy, theſe many years, has been
To boaſt that *Coriolanus* was my ſon?
And doſt thou then renounce me for thy mother?
Spurn me before theſe chiefs, before thoſe ſoldiers,
That weep thy ſtubborn cruelty? Art thou
The hardeſt man to me in this aſſembly?
Look at me! Speak!

[*Pauſing, during which he appears in great agitation.*

Still doſt thou turn away?
Inexorable? ſilent?—Then, behold me,
Behold thy mother, at whoſe feet thou oft
Haſt kneel'd with fondneſs, kneeling now at thine,
Wetting thy ſtern tribunal with her tears.

CORIOLANUS. [*Raiſes her.*

Veturia, riſe. I cannot ſee thee thus.
It is a ſight uncomely, to behold
My mother at my feet, and that to urge
A ſuit, relentleſs honour muſt refuſe

VOLUMNIA. [*Advancing.*

Since, *Coriolanus*, thou doſt ſtill retain,
In ſpite of all thy mother now has pleaded,
Thy dreadful purpoſe, ah! how much in vain
Were it for me to join my ſupplications!
The voice of thy *Volumnia*, once ſo pleaſing;
How ſhall it hope to touch the huſband's heart,
When proof againſt the tears of ſuch a parent?
I dare not urge what to thy mother thou
So firmly haſt deny'd——But I muſt weep——

Muſt

Muſt weep, if not thy harſh ſeverity,
At leaſt thy ſituation. O permit me
[*Taking his hand.*
To ſhed my guſhing tears upon thy hand!
To preſs it with the cordial lips of love!
And take my laſt farewel!

CORIOLANUS.

Yet, yet, my ſoul,
Be firm, and perſevere——

VOLUMNIA.

Ah *Coriolanus!*
Is then this hand, this hand to me devoted,
The pledge of nuptial love, that has ſo long
Protected, bleſs'd, and ſhelter'd us with kindneſs,
Now lifted up againſt us? Yet I love it,
And, with ſubmiſſive veneration, bow
Beneath th' affliction which it heaps upon us.
But O! what nobler tranſports would it give thee!
What joy beyond expreſſion! couldſt thou once
Surmount the furious ſtorm of fierce revenge,
And yield thee to the charms of love and mercy.
Oh make the glorious trial!

CORIOLANUS.

Mother! wife!
Are all the powers of nature leagu'd againſt me?
I cannot!—will not!—Leave me, my *Volumnia!*

VOLUMNIA.

Well, I obey—How bitter thus to part!
Upon ſuch terms to part! perhaps for ever!——

But tell me, ere I hence unroot my feet,
When to my lonely home I ſhall return,
What from their father, to our little ſlaves,
Unconſcious of the ſhame to which you doom them,
What ſhall I ſay?

[*Pauſing: He highly agitated.*

Nay, tell me, *Coriolanus!*

CORIOLANUS.

Tell thee! What ſhall I tell thee? See theſe tears!
Theſe tears will tell thee what exceeds the power
Of words to ſpeak, whate'er the ſon, the huſband,
And father, in one complicated pang,
Can feel—But leave me;—even in pity leave!
Ceaſe, ceaſe, to torture me, my dear *Volumnia!*
You only tear my heart; but cannot ſhake it:
For by th' immortal gods, the dread avengers
Of broken faith!———

VOLUMNIA. [*Kneeling.*

Oh ſwear not, *Coriolanus!*
Oh vow not our deſtruction!

VETURIA.

Daughter, riſe.
Let us no more before the *Volſcian* people
Expoſe ourſelves a ſpectacle of ſhame.
It is in vain we try to melt a breaſt,
That to the beſt affections nature gives us,
Prefers the worſt—Hear me, proud man! I have
A heart as ſtout as thine. I came not hither,
To be ſent back rejected, baffled, ſham'd,

Hateful

Hateful to *Rome*, becauſe I am thy mother;
A *Roman* matron knows, in ſuch extremes,
What part to take—And thus I came provided.
[*Drawing from under her robe a dagger.*
Go! barbarous ſon! go! double parricide!
Ruſh o'er my corſe to thy belov'd revenge!
Tread on the bleeding breaſt of her, to whom
Thou ow'ſt thy life!—Lo, thy firſt victim!

CORIOLANUS.

Ha! [*Seizing her hand.*
What doſt thou mean?

VETURIA.

To die, while *Rome* is free.
To ſeize the moment ere thou art her tyrant.

CORIOLANUS.

O uſe thy power more juſtly! Set not thus
My treacherous heart in arms againſt my reaſon.
Here! here! thy dagger will be well employ'd;
Strike here! and reconcile my fighting duties.

VETURIA.

Off!--Set me free!--Thinkſt thou that graſp, which binds
My feeble hand, can fetter too my will?
No, my proud ſon! Thou canſt not make me live,
If *Rome* muſt fall!—No pow'r on earth can do it!

CORIOLANUS.

Pity me, generous *Volſci!*—You are men—
Muſt it then be?—Confuſion!—Do I yield?
What is it? Is it weakneſs? Is it virtue?—
Well!—

VETURIA.

VETURIA.

What? Speak!

CORIOLANUS.

O, no!—my ſtifled words refuſe
A paſſage to the throes that wring my heart.

VETURIA.

Nay, if thou yieldeſt, yield like *Coriolanus*;
And what thou do'ſt, do nobly!

CORIOLANUS. [*Quitting her hand.*

There!—'Tis done!—
Thine is the triumph, nature! [*To* VETURIA *in a low tone of voice.*
Ah, *Veturia!*
Rome by thy aid is ſav'd—but thy ſon loſt.

VETURIA.

He never can be loſt, who ſaves his country.

CORIOLANUS. [*Turning to the* Roman *ladies.*

Ye matrons, guardians of the *Roman* ſafety,
You to the ſenate may report this anſwer.
We grant the truce you aſk. But on theſe terms:
That *Rome*, mean-time, ſhall to a peace agree,
Fair, equal, juſt, and ſuch as may ſecure
The ſafety, rights, and honour of the *Volſci*.
[*To the troops,*
Volſci, We raiſe the ſiege. Go, and prepare,
By the firſt dawn, for your return to *Antium*.
[*As the troops retire, and* Coriolanus *turns to the* Roman *ladies;*

TULLUS, [*To* Voluſius *aſide.*

'Tis as we wiſh'd, *Voluſius*—To your ſtation.

But

But mark me well—Till thou ſhalt hear my call,
I charge thee not to ſtir. One offer more
My honour bids me make to this proud man,
Before we ſtrike the blow—If he rejects it,
His blood be on his head.

VOLUSIUS.

Well! I obey you.

[*He goes out.*

CORIOLANUS.

Be it thy care, *Galeſus*, that a ſafeguard
Attend theſe noble matrons back to *Rome*.

SCENE II.

CORIOLANUS, TULLUS,

CORIOLANUS.

I plainly, *Tullus*, by your looks diſcern
You diſapprove my conduct.

TULLUS.

Caius Marcius,
I mean not to aſſail thee with the clamour
Of loud reproaches, and the war of words;
But, pride apart, and all that can pervert
The light of ſteady reaſon, here to make
A candid fair propoſal.

CORI-

CORIOLANUS.

Speak. I hear thee.

TULLUS.

I need not tell thee, that I have perform'd
My utmoſt promiſe. Thou haſt been protected;
Haſt had thy ampleſt, moſt ambitious wiſh:
Thy wounded pride is heal'd, thy dear revenge
Compleatly ſated; and, to crown thy fortune,
At the ſame time thy peace with *Rome* reſtor'd.
Thou art no more a *Volſcian*, but a *Roman*.
Return, return; thy duty calls upon thee,
Still to protect the city thou haſt ſav'd:
It ſtill may be in danger from our arms.

CORIOLANUS.

Inſolent man. Is this thy fair propoſal?

TULLUS.

Be patient—Hear me ſpeak—I have already
From *Rome* protected thee; now from the *Volſci*,
From their juſt vengeance, I will ſtill protect thee.
Retire. I will take care thou may'ſt with ſafety.

CORIOLANUS.

With ſafety!--Heav'ns!--And think'ſt thou, *Coriolanus*
Will ſtoop to thee for ſafety? No! my ſafeguard
Is in myſelf, a boſom void of blame,
And the great gods, protectors of the juſt.—
O 'tis an act of cowardice and baſeneſs,
To ſeize the very time my hands were fetter'd,
By the ſtrong chain of former obligations,
The ſafe ſure moment to inſult me.—Gods!

Were

Were I now free, as on that day I was,
When at *Corioli* I tam'd thy pride,
This had not been.

TULLUS.

Thou ſpeak'ſt the truth: It had not.
O for that time again! Propitious gods,
If you will bleſs me, grant it!—Know, for that,
For that dear purpoſe, I have now propos'd
Thou ſhouldſt return. I pray thee, *Marcius*, do it!
And we ſhall meet again on nobler terms.

CORIOLANUS.

When to the *Volſci* I have clear'd my faith,
Doubt not I ſhall find means to meet thee nobly.
We then our generous quarrel may decide
In the bright front of ſome embattl'd field,
And not in private brawls, like fierce barbarians.

TULLUS.

Thou canſt not hope acquittal from the *Volſci*.—

CORIOLANUS.

I do:—Nay more, expect their approbation,
Their thanks! I will obtain them ſuch a peace
As thou durſt never aſk; a perfect union
Of their whole nation with imperial *Rome*
In all her privileges, all her rights.
By the juſt gods, I will! What would'ſt thou more?

TULLUS.

What would I more! Proud *Roman?* This I would;
Fire the curſt foreſt where the *Roman* wolves
Haunt and infeſt their nobler neighbours round them;

Extirpate

Extirpate from the boſom of this land
A falſe perfidious people, who, beneath
The maſk of freedom, are a combination
Againſt the liberty of human-kind,
The genuine ſeed of outlaws and of robbers.

CORIOLANUS.

The ſeed of gods!—'Tis not for thee, vain boaſter!
'Tis not for ſuch as thou, ſo often ſpar'd
By her victorious ſword, to talk of *Rome*,
But with reſpect and awful veneration.
Whate'er her blots, whate'er her giddy factions,
There is more virtue in one ſingle year
Of *Roman* ſtory, than your *Volſcian* annals
Can boaſt thro' all your creeping dark duration!

TULLUS.

I thank thy rage. This full diſplays the traitor.

CORIOLANUS.

Ha! traitor!

TULLUS.

Firſt, to thy own country, traitor!
And traitor, now, to mine!

CORIOLANUS.

Ye heavenly powers!
I ſhall break looſe—My rage—But let us part—
Leſt my raſh hand ſhould do a haſty deed
My cooler thought forbids.

TULLUS.

Be gone—Return—
To head the *Roman* troops. I grant thee quittance

Full

Full and complete of all thoſe obligations
Thou haſt ſo oft inſultingly complain'd
Fetter'd thy hands. They now are free. I court
The worſt thy ſword can do; whilſt thou from me
Haſt nothing to expect, but ſore deſtruction.
Quit then this hoſtile camp. Once more I tell thee,
Thou art not here one ſingle hour in ſafety.

CORIOLANUS.

Think'ſt thou to fright me hence?

TULLUS.

Thou wilt not then?
Thou wilt not take the ſafety which I offer?

CORIOLANUS.

Till I have clear'd my honour in your council,
And prov'd before them all, to thy confuſion,
The falſhood of thy charge; as ſoon in battle
I would before thee fly, and howl for mercy,
As quit the ſtation they have here aſſign'd me.

TULLUS,

Voluſius! Hoa!

SCENE III.

To them Voluſius, *and conſpirators, with their ſwords drawn.*

TULLUS.

Seize and ſecure the traitor!

CORIO-

CORIOLANUS.

[*Laying his hand upon his ſword.*

Who dares approach me, dies!

VOLUSIUS.

Die thou!

[*As* Coriolanus *draws his ſword,* Volusius *and the conſpirators cuſh upon and ſtab him.* Tullus *ſtanding by without having drawn his ſword.*

CORIOLANUS.

[*Endeavouring to free himſelf.*

Off!—Villains!

[*Falling.*

O murdering ſlaves! Aſſaſſinating cowards!

[*Dies.*

SCENE IV.

[*Upon the noiſe of the tumult, enter haſtily to them* Galeſus, *the other deputies of the* Volſcian *ſtates, officers friends of* Coriolanus, *and* Titus *with a large band of ſoldiers.*

GALESUS.

[*As he enters.*

Are we a nation rul'd by laws, or fury?
How! whence this tumult?— [*Pauſing.*
Gods! what do I ſee?
The noble *Marcius* ſlain!

TULLUS.

TULLUS.

You ſee a traitor
Puniſh'd as he deſerv'd, the *Roman* yoke
That thrall'd us broken, and the *Volſci* free!

GALESUS.

Hear me, great *Jove!* Hear, all you injur'd powers
Of friendſhip, hoſpitality and faith!
By that heroic blood, which from the ground
Reeking to you for vengeance cries, I ſwear!
This impious breach of your eternal laws,
This daring outrage on the *Volſcian* honour,
Shall find in me a rigorous avenger!
On the ſame earth, polluted by their crime,
I will not live with theſe unpuniſh'd ruffians!

TULLUS.

This deed is mine: I claim it all!—Theſe men,
Theſe valiant men, were but my inſtruments,
To puniſh him who to our face betray'd us.
We ſhall not fear to anſwer to the *Volſci*,
In a full council of the ſtates at *Antium*,
The glorious charge of having ſtabb'd their traitor!

GALESUS.

Titus, till then ſecure them.

[Tullus *and conſpirators are led off.*

[Galeſus, *ſtanding over the body of* Coriolanus, *after a ſhort pauſe, proceeds.*

Volſcian fathers,
And ye, brave ſoldiers, ſee an awful ſcene,
Demanding

Demanding ſerious ſolemn meditation.
This man was once the glory of his age,
Diſintereſted, juſt, with every virtue
Of civil life adorn'd, in arms unequall'd.
His only blot was this; that, much provok'd,
He rais'd his vengeful arm againſt his country.
And, lo! the righteous gods have now chaſtis'd him,
Even by the hands of thoſe for whom he fought.

Whatever private views and paſſions plead,
No cauſe can juſtify ſo black a deed:
Theſe, when the angry tempeſt clouds the ſoul,
May darken reaſon, and her courſe controul;
But when the proſpect clears, her ſtartled eye
Muſt from the treacherous gulph with horror fly,
On whoſe wild wave, by ſtormy paſſions toſt,
So many hapleſs wretches have been loſt.
Then be this truth the ſtar by which we ſteer,
Above ourſelves *our* COUNTRY *ſhould be dear.*

End of the Fifth Act.

EPI-

EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY

Mrs. *WOFFINGTON.*

WELL! Gentlemen! and are you ſtill ſo vain
To treat our ſex with arrogant diſdain;
And think, to you alone by partial heav'n
Superior ſenſe and ſovereign power are given,
When in the ſtory told to-night, you find,
With what a boundleſs ſway we rule the mind,
And, by a few ſoft words of ours, with eaſe,
Can turn the proudeſt hearts juſt where we pleaſe?
If an old mother had ſuch powerful charms,
To ſtop a ſtubborn Roman's *conquering arms,—*
Soldiers and ſtateſmen of theſe days, with you,
What think you wou'd a fair young miſtreſs do?
If with my grave diſcourſe and wrinkled face,
I thus could bring a hero to diſgrace,
How abſolutely may I hope to reign
Now I am turn'd to my own ſhape again!
However, I will uſe my empire well;
And, if I have a certain magic ſpell

Or

Or in my tongue, or wit, or ſhape, or eyes,
Which can ſubdue the ſtrong, and fool the wiſe,
Be not alarm'd: I will not interfere
In ſtate-affairs, nor undertake to ſteer
The helm of government,—as we are told
Theſe female politicians did of old:
Such dangerous heights I never wiſh'd to climb——
Thank heav'n I better can employ my time——
Aſk you to what my pow'r I ſhall apply?
To make my ſubjects bleſt, is my reply.
My purpoſes are gracious all, and kind.
Some may be told—and ſome may be divin'd:
One, which at preſent I have moſt at heart,
To you without reſerve I will impart:
It is my ſovereign will,—Hear and obey,—
That you with candour treat this Orphan Play.

The End of the FOURTH VOLUME.